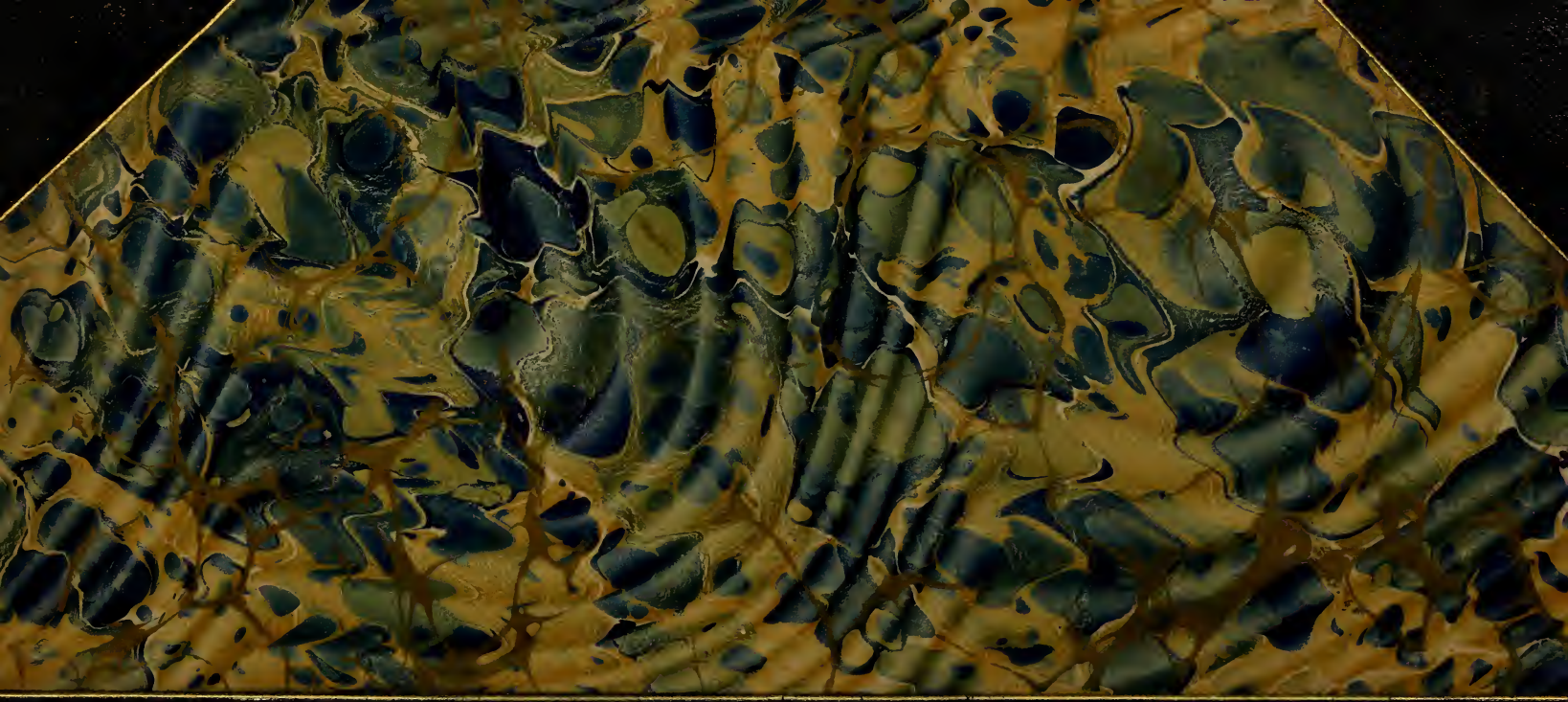

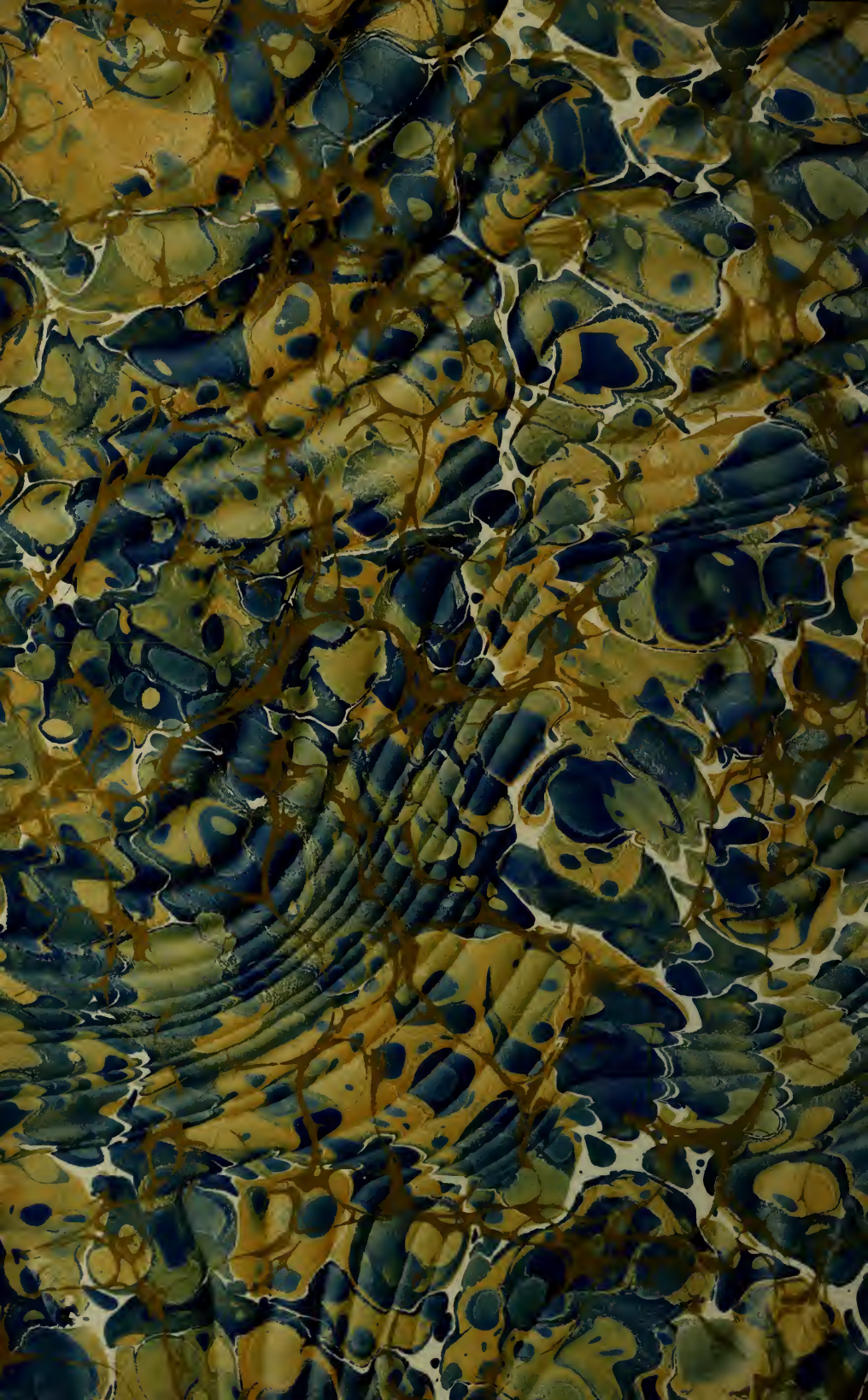

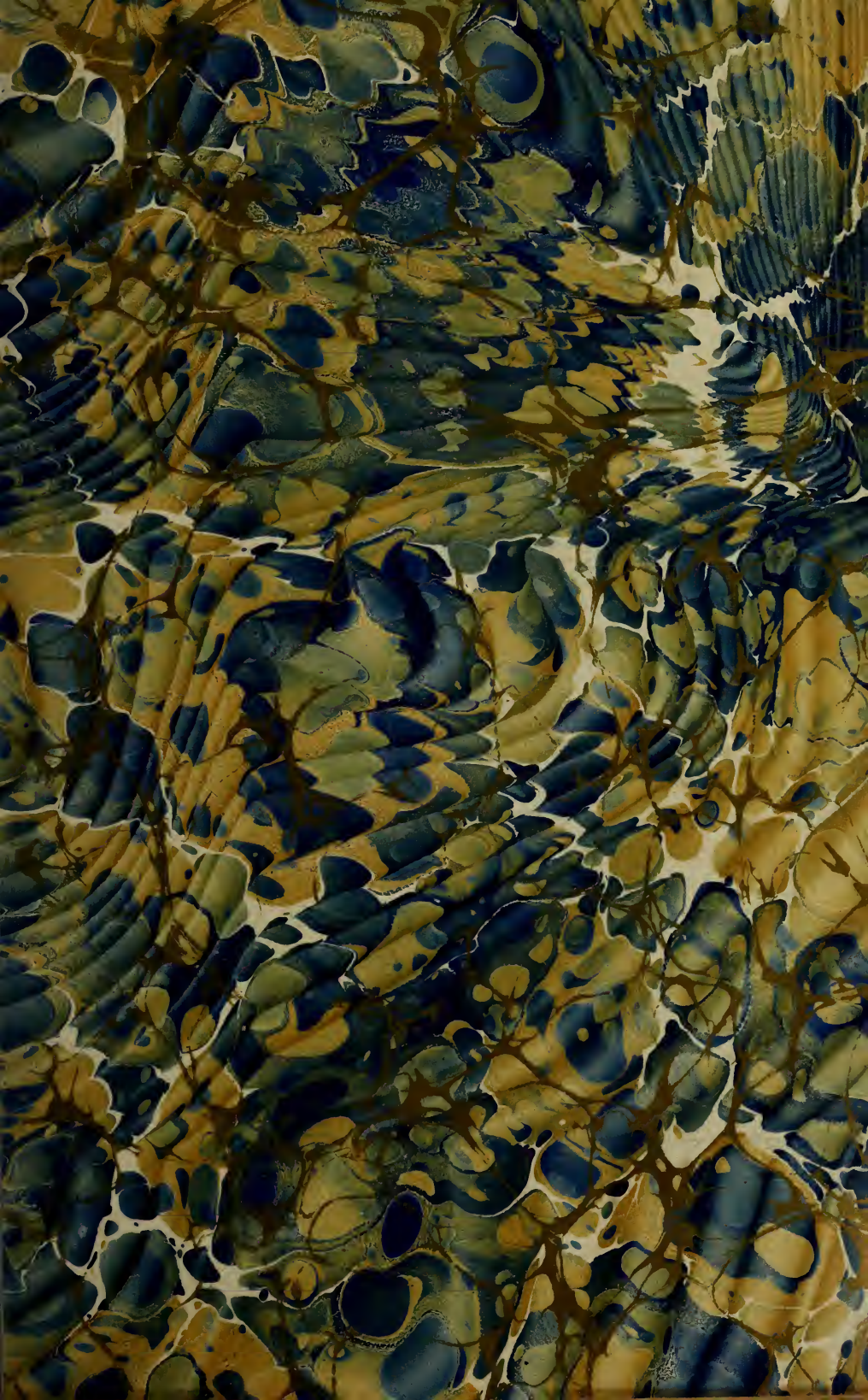

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WORKS

OF

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

THE

WORKS

OF

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.
1823.

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Vol.5

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1823x
v.5

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SIR OWEN DALE.

AGAIN the Brothers saw their friend the priest,
Who shared the comforts he so much increased;
Absent of late—and thus the squire address'd,
With welcome smile, his ancient friend and guest.

" What has detain'd thee? some parochial case?
" Some man's desertion, or some maid's disgrace?
" Or wert thou call'd, as parish priest, to give
" Name to a new-born thing that would not live,
" That its weak glance upon the world had thrown,
" And shrank in terror from the prospect shown?
" Or hast thou heard some dying wretch deplore,
" That of his pleasures he could taste no more?
" Who wish'd thy aid his spirits to sustain,
" And drive away the fears that gave him pain?

" For priests are thought to have a patent charm
" To ease the dying sinner of alarm:
" Or was thy business of the carnal sort,
" And thou wert gone a patron's smile to court,
" And Croft or Cresswell would'st to Binning add,
" Or take, kind soul! whatever could be had?
" Once more I guess: th' election now is near;
" My friend, perhaps, is sway'd, by hope or fear,
" And all a patriot's wishes, forth to ride,
" And hunt for votes to prop the fav'rite side?"

" More private duty call'd me hence, to pay
" My friends respect on a rejoicing day,"
Replied the rector: " there is born a son,
" Pride of an ancient race, who pray'd for one,
" And long desponded. Would you hear the tale—
" Ask, and 'tis granted—of Sir Owen Dale?"

" Grant," said the Brothers, " for we humbly ask;
" Ours be the gratitude, and thine the task:
" Yet dine we first: then to this tale of thine,
" As to thy sermon, seriously incline:
" In neither case our rector shall complain,
" Of this recited, that composed in vain.

" Something we heard of vengeance, who appall'd,
" Like an infernal spirit, him who call'd;
" And, ere he vanish'd, would perform his part,
" Inflicting tortures on the wounded heart;
" Of this but little from report we know:
" If you the progress of revenge can show,
" Give it, and all its horrors, if you please,
" We hear our neighbour's sufferings much at ease.

" Is it not so? For do not men delight—
" We call them men—our bruisers to excite,
" And urge with bribing gold, and feed them for the fight?
" Men beyond common strength, of giant size,
" And threat'ning terrors in each other's eyes;
" When in their naked, native force display'd,
" Look answers look, affrighting and afraid;
" While skill, like spurs and feeding, gives the arm
" The wicked power to do the greater harm:
" Maim'd in the strife, the falling man sustains
" Th' insulting shout, that aggravates his pains:—
" Man can bear this; and shall thy hearers heed
" A tale of human sufferings? Come! proceed."

Thus urged, the worthy rector thought it meet
Some moral truth, as preface, to repeat;

Reflection serious,—common-place, 'tis true,—
But he would act as he was wont to do,
And bring his morals in his neighbour's view.

" O! how the passions, insolent and strong,
" Bear our weak minds their rapid course along;
" Make us the madness of their will obey;
" Then die, and leave us to our griefs a prey!"

Sir Owen Dale his fortieth year had seen,
With temper placid, and with mind serene;
Rich; early married to an easy wife,
They led in comfort a domestic life:
He took of his affairs a prudent care,
And was by early habit led to spare;
Not as a miser, but in pure good taste,
That scorn'd the idle wantonness of waste.

In fact, the lessons he from prudence took
Were written in his mind, as in a book:
There what to do he read, and what to shun;
And all commanded was with promptness done;
He seem'd without a passion to proceed,
Or one whose passions no correction need;

Yet some believed those passions only slept,
And were in bounds by early habits kept:
Curb'd as they were by fetters worn so long,
There were who judged them a rebellious throng.

To these he stood, not as a hero true,
Who fought his foes, and in the combat slew,
But one who all those foes, when sleeping, found,
And, unresisted, at his pleasure bound.

We thought—for I was one—that we espied
Some indications strong of dormant pride;
It was his wish in peace with all to live;
And he could pardon, but could not forgive:
Nay, there were times when stern defiance shook
The moral man, and threaten'd in his look.

Should these fierce passions—so we reason'd—break
Their long-worn chain, what ravage will they make!
In vain will prudence then contend with pride,
And reason vainly bid revenge subside;
Anger will not to meek persuasion bend,
Nor to the pleas of hope or fear attend:

What curb shall, then, in their disorder'd race,
Check the wild passions? what the calm replace?
Virtue shall strive in vain; and has he help in grace?

While yet the wife with pure discretion ruled,
The man was guided, and the mind was school'd;
But then that mind unaided ran to waste:
He had some learning, but he wanted taste:
Placid, not pleased—contented, not employ'd,—
He neither time improved, nor life enjoy'd.

That wife expired, and great the loss sustain'd,
Though much distress he neither felt nor feign'd;
He loved not warmly; but the sudden stroke
Deeply and strongly on his habits broke.

He had no child to soothe him, and his farm,
His sports, his speculations, lost their charm;
Then would he read and travel, would frequent
Life's busy scenes, and forth Sir Owen went:
The mind, that now was free, unfix'd, uncheck'd,
Read and observed with wonderful effect;
And still the more he gain'd, the more he long'd
To pay that mind his negligence had wrong'd;

He felt his pleasures rise as he improved;
And, first enduring, then the labour loved.

But, by the light let in, Sir Owen found
Some of those passions had their chain unbound;
As from a trance they rose to act their part,
And seize, as due to them, a feeling heart.

His very person now appear'd refined,
And took some graces from th' improving mind:
He grew polite without a fix'd intent,
And to the world a willing pupil went.

Restore him twenty years,—restore him ten,—
And bright had been his earthly prospect then;
But much refinement, when it late arrives,
May be the grace, not comfort, of our lives.

Now had Sir Owen feeling; things of late
Indifferent, he began to love or hate;
What once could neither good nor ill impart
Now pleased the senses, and now touch'd the heart;
Prospects and pictures struck th' awaken'd sight,
And each new object gave a new delight.

He, like th' imperfect creature who had shaped
A shroud to hide him, had at length escaped;
Changed from his grub-like state, to crawl no more,
But a wing'd being, pleased and form'd to soar.

Now, said his friends, while thus his views improve,
And his mind softens, what if he should love?
True; life with him has yet serene appear'd,
And therefore love in wisdom should be fear'd:
Forty and five his years, and then to sigh
For beauty's favour!—Son of frailty, fly!

Alas! he loved; it was our fear, but ours,
His friends alone. He doubted not his pow'rs
To win the prize, or to repel the charm,
To gain the battle, or escape the harm;
For he had never yet resistance proved,
Nor fear'd that friends should say—'Alas! he loved.'

Younger by twenty years, Camilla found
Her face unrivall'd when she smiled or frown'd:
Of all approved; in manner, form, and air,
Made to attract; gay, elegant, and fair:

She had, in beauty's aid, a fair pretence
To cultivated, strong intelligence;
For she a clear and ready mind had fed
With wholesome food; unhurt by what she read:
She loved to please; but, like her dangerous sex,
To please the more whom she design'd to vex.

This heard Sir Owen, and he saw it true;
It promised pleasure, promised danger too;
But this he knew not then, or slighted if he knew.

Yet he delay'd, and would by trials prove
That he was safe; would see the signs of love;
Would not address her while a fear remain'd;
But win his way, assured of what he gain'd.

This saw the lady, not displeased to find
A man at once so cautious and so blind:
She saw his hopes that she would kindly show
Proofs of her passion—then she his should know.

"So, when my heart is bleeding in his sight,
"His love acknowledged will the pains requite;
"It is, when conquer'd, he the heart regards;
"Well, good Sir Owen! let us play our cards."

He spake her praise in terms that love affords,
By words select, and looks surpassing words:
Kindly she listen'd, and in turn essay'd
To pay th' applauses—and she amply paid
A beauty flattering!—beauteous flatterers feel
The ill you cause, when thus in praise you deal;
For surely he is more than man, or less,
When praised by lips that he would die to press,
And yet his senses undisturb'd can keep,
Can calmly reason, or can soundly sleep.

Not so Sir Owen; him Camilla praised,
And lofty hopes and strong emotions raised;
This had alone the strength of man subdued;
But this enchantress various arts pursued.

Let others pray for music—others pray'd
In vain:—Sir Owen ask'd, and was obey'd;
Let others, walking, sue that arm to take,
Unmoved she kept it for Sir Owen's sake;
Each small request she granted, and though small,
He thought them pledges of her granting all.

And now the lover, casting doubt aside,
Urged the fond suit that—could not be denied;

Joy more than reverence moved him when he said,
" Now banish all my fears, angelic maid!"
And as she paused for words, he gaily cried,
" I must not, cannot, will not be denied."

Ah! good Sir Owen, think not favours, such
As artful maids allow, amount to much;
The sweet, small, poison'd baits, that take the eye
And win the soul of all who venture nigh.

Camilla listen'd, paused, and look'd surprise,
Fair witch! exulting in her witcheries!
She turn'd aside her face, withdrew her hand,
And softly said, " Sir, let me understand."

" Nay, my dear lady! what can words explain,
" If all my looks and actions plead in vain?
" I love"—She show'd a cool respectful air,
And he began to falter in his prayer,
Yet urged her kindness—Kindness she confess'd,
It was esteem, she felt it, and express'd,
For her dear father's friend; and was it right
That friend of his—she thought of hers—to slight?

This to the wond'ring lover strange and new,
And false appear'd—he would not think it true:
Still he pursued the lovely prize, and still
Heard the cold words, design'd his hopes to kill;
He felt dismay'd, as he perceived success
Had inverse ratio, more obtaining less;
And still she grew more cool in her replies,
And talk'd of age and improprieties.

Then to his friends, although it hurt his pride,
And to the lady's, he for aid applied;
Who kindly woo'd for him, but strongly were denied.

And now it was those fiercer passions rose,
Urged by his love to murder his repose;
Shame shook his soul to be deceived so long,
And fierce revenge for such contemptuous wrong;
Jealous he grew, and jealousy supplied
His mind with rage, unsooth'd, unsatisfied;
And grievous were the pangs of deeply wounded pride.
His generous soul had not the grief sustain'd,
Had he not thought, 'revenge may be obtain'd.'

Camilla grieved, but grief was now too late;
She hush'd her fears, and left th' event to fate;

Four years elapsed, nor knew Sir Owen yet
How to repay the meditated debt;
The lovely foe was in her thirtieth year,
Nor saw the favourite of the heart appear;
'Tis sure less sprightly the fair nymph became,
And spoke of former levities with shame:
But this, alas! was not in time confess'd,
And vengeance waited in Sir Owen's breast.

But now the time arrives—the maid must feel
And grieve for wounds that she refused to heal.
Sir Owen, childless, in his love had rear'd
A sister's son, and now the youth appear'd
In all the pride of manhood, and, beside,
With all a soldier's spirit and his pride:
Valiant and poor, with all that arms bestow,
And wants that captains in their quarters know;
Yet to his uncle's generous heart was due
The praise, that wants of any kind were few.

When he appear'd, Sir Owen felt a joy
Unknown before, his vengeance bless'd the boy—
"To him I dare confide a cause so just;
"Love him she may—O! could I say, she must."

Thus fix'd, he more than usual kindness show'd,
Nor let the captain name the debt he owed;
But when he spoke of gratitude, exclaim'd,
" My dearest Morden! make me not ashamed;
" Each for a friend should do the best he can,
" The most obliged is the obliging man;
" But if you wish to give as well as take,
" You may a debtor of your uncle make."

Morden was earnest in his wish to know
How he could best his grateful spirit show.

Now the third dinner had their powers renew'd,
And fruit and wine upon the table stood;
The fire brought comfort, and the warmth it lent
A cheerful spirit to the feelings sent,
When thus the uncle—" Morden, I depend
" On you for aid—assist me as a friend:
" Full well I know that you would much forego,
" And much endure, to wreak me on my foe.
" Charles, I am wrong'd, insulted—nay, be still,
" Nor look so fiercely,—there are none to kill.

" I loved a lady, somewhat late in life,
" Perhaps too late, and would have made a wife;

" Nay, she consented; for consent I call
" The mark'd distinction that was seen of all,
" And long was seen; but when she knew my pain,
" Saw my first wish her favour to obtain,
" And ask her hand—no sooner was it ask'd,
" Than she the lovely Jezebel unmask'd;
" And by her haughty airs, and scornful pride,
" My peace was wounded—nay, my reason tried;
" I felt despised and fallen when we met,
" And she, O folly! looks too lovely yet;
" Yet love no longer in my bosom glows,
" But my heart warms at the revenge it owes.

" O! that I saw her with her soul on fire,
" Desperate from love, and sickening with desire;
" While all beheld her just, unpitied pain,
" Grown in neglect, and sharpen'd by disdain!
" Let her be jealous of each maid she sees,
" Striving by every fruitless art to please,
" And when she fondly looks, let looks and fondness tease!
" So, lost on passion's never resting sea,
" Hopeless and helpless, let her think of me.

" Charles, thou art handsome, nor canst want the art
" To warm a cold or win a wanton heart;
" Be my avenger"——
Charles, with smile, not vain,
Nor quite unmix'd with pity and disdain,
Sate mute in wonder; but he sate not long
Without reflection:—Was Sir Owen wrong?
" So must I think; for can I judge it right
" To treat a lovely lady with despite?
" Because she play'd too roughly with the love
" Of a fond man whom she could not approve,
" And yet to vex him for the love he bore
" Is cause enough for his revenge, and more.

" But, thoughts, to council!—Do I wear a charm
" That will preserve my citadel from harm?
" Like the good knight, I have a heart that feels
" The wounds that beauty makes and kindness heals:
" Beauty she has, it seems, but is not kind—
" So found Sir Owen, and so I may find.

" Yet why, O! heart of tinder, why afraid?
" Comes so much danger from so fair a maid?

" Wilt thou be made a voluntary prize
" To the fierce firing of two wicked eyes?
" Think her a foe, and on the danger rush,
" Nor let thy kindred for a coward blush.

" But how if this fair creature should incline
" To think too highly of this love of mine,
" And, taking all my counterfeit address
" For sterling passion, should the like profess?

" Nay, this is folly; or if I perceive
" Ought of the kind, I can but take my leave;
" And if the heart should feel a little sore,
" Contempt and anger will its ease restore.

" Then, too, to his all-bounteous hand I owe
" All I possess, and almost all I know;
" And shall I for my friend no hazard run,
" Who seeks no more for all his love has done?

" 'Tis but to meet and bow, to talk and smile,
" To act a part, and put on love awhile:
" And the good knight shall see, this trial made,
" That I have just his talents to persuade;

" For why the lady should her heart bestow
" On me, or I of her enamour'd grow,
" There 's none can reason give, there 's none can danger show."

These were his rapid thoughts, and then he spoke.
" I make a promise, and will not revoke;
" You are my judge in what is fit and right,
" And I obey you—bid me love or fight;
" Yet had I rather, so the act could meet
" With your concurrence,—not to play the cheat;
" In a fair cause"——" Charles, fighting for your king,
" Did you e'er judge the merits of the thing?
" Show me a monarch who has cause like mine,
" And yet what soldier would his cause decline?"

Poor Charles or saw not, or refused to see,
How weak the reasoning of our hopes may be,
And said—" Dear uncle, I my king obey'd,
" And for his glory's sake the soldier play'd;
" Now a like duty shall your nephew rule,
" And for your vengeance I will play the fool."

'Twas well; but ere they parted for repose,
A solemn oath must the engagement close.

" Swear to me, nephew, from the day you meet
" This cruel girl, there shall be no deceit;
" That by all means approved and used by man
" You win this dangerous woman, if you can;
" That being won, you my commands obey,
" Leave her lamenting, and pursue your way;
" And that, as in my business, you will take
" My will as guide, and no resistance make:
" Take now an oath—within the volume look,
" There is the Gospel—swear, and kiss the book."

" It cannot be," thought Charles, " he cannot rest
" In this strange humour,—it is all a jest,
" All but dissimulation——Well, sir, there;
" Now I have sworn as you would have me swear."

" 'Tis well," the uncle said in solemn tone;
" Now send me vengeance, Fate, and groan for groan!"

The time is come: the soldier now must meet
Th' unconscious object of the sworn deceit.
They meet; each other's looks the pair explore,
And, such their fortune, wish'd to part no more.

Whether a man is thus disposed to break
An evil compact he was forced to make,
Or whether some contention in the breast
Will not permit a feeling heart to rest;
Or was it nature, who in every case
Has made such mind subjected to such face;
Whate'er the cause, no sooner met the pair
Than both began to love, and one to feel despair.

But the fair damsel saw with strong delight
Th' impression made, and gloried in the sight:
No chilling doubt alarm'd her tender breast,
But she rejoiced in all his looks profess'd;
Long ere his words her lover's hopes convey'd
They warm'd the bosom of the conscious maid;
One spirit seem'd each nature to inspire,
And the two hearts were fix'd in one desire.

"Now," thought the courteous maid, "my father's friend
"Will ready pardon to my fault extend;
"He shall no longer lead that hermit's life,
"But love his mistress in his nephew's wife;
"My humble duty shall his anger kill,
"And I who fled his love will meet his will,
"Prevent his least desire, and every wish fulfil."

Hail, happy power! that to the present lends
Such views; not all on Fortune's wheel depends,
Hope, fair enchantress, drives each cloud away,
And now enjoys the glad, but distant day.

Still fears ensued; for love produces fear.—
" To this dear maid can I indeed be dear?
" My fatal oath, alas! I now repent;
" Stern in his purpose, he will not relent;
" Would, ere that oath, I had Camilla seen!
" I had not then my honour's victim been:
" I must be honest, yet I know not how,
" 'Tis crime to break, and death to keep my vow."

Sir Owen closely watch'd both maid and man,
And saw with joy proceed his cruel plan;
Then gave his praise—" She has it—has it deep
" In her capricious heart,—it murders sleep;
" You see the looks that grieve, you see the eyes that weep;
" Now breathe again, dear youth, the kindling fire,
" And let her feel what she could once inspire."

Alas! obedience was an easy task,
So might he cherish what he meant to ask;

He ventured soon, for Love prepared his way,
He sought occasion, he forbad delay;
In spite of vow foregone he taught the youth
The looks of passion, and the words of truth;
In spite of woman's caution, doubt, and fear,
He bade her credit all she wish'd to hear;
An honest passion ruled in either breast,
And both believed the truth that both profess'd.

But now, 'mid all her new-born hopes, the eyes
Of fair Camilla saw through all disguise,
Reserve, and apprehension——Charles, who now
Grieved for his duty, and abhorr'd his vow,
Told the full fact, and it endear'd him more;
She felt her power, and pardon'd all he swore,
Since to his vow he could his wish prefer,
And loved the man who gave his world for her.

What must they do, and how their work begin,
Can they that temper to their wishes win?
They tried, they fail'd; and all they did t' assuage
The tempest of his soul provoked his rage;
The uncle met the youth with angry look,
And cried, "Remember, sir, the oath you took;

" You have my pity, Charles, but nothing more,
" Death, and death only, shall her peace restore;
" And am I dying?—I shall live to view
" The harlot's sorrow, and enjoy it too.

" How! Words offend you? I have borne for years
" Unheeded anguish, shed derided tears,
" Felt scorn in every look, endured the stare
" Of wondering fools, who never felt a care;
" On me all eyes were fix'd, and I the while
" Sustain'd the insult of a rival's smile.

" And shall I now—entangled thus my foe,
" My honest vengeance for a boy forego?
" A boy forewarn'd, forearm'd? Shall this be borne,
" And I be cheated, Charles, and thou forsworn?
" Hope not, I say, for thou mayst change as well
" The sentence graven on the gates of hell—
" Here bid adieu to hope,—here hopeless beings dwell.

" But does she love thee, Charles? I cannot live
" Dishonour'd, unrevenged—I may forgive,
" But to thy oath I bind thee; on thy soul
" Seek not my injured spirit to control;

" Seek not to soften, I am hard of heart,
" Harden'd by insult:—leave her now, and part,
" And let me know she grieves while I enjoy her smart."

Charles first in anger to the knight replied,
Then felt the clog upon his soul, and sigh'd:
To his obedience made his wishes stoop,
And now admitted, now excluded hope;
As lovers do, he saw a prospect fair,
And then so dark, he sank into despair.

The uncle grieved; he even told the youth
That he was sorry, and it seem'd a truth;
But though it vex'd, it varied not his mind,
He bound himself, and would his nephew bind.

" I told him this, placed danger in his view,
" Bade him be certain, bound him to be true;
" And shall I now my purposes reject,
" Because my warnings were of no effect?"

Thus felt Sir Owen as a man whose cause
Is very good—it had his own applause.

Our knight a tenant had in high esteem,
His constant boast, when justice was his theme:
He praised the farmer's sense, his shrewd discourse,
Free without rudeness, manly, and not coarse;
As farmer, tenant, nay, as man, the knight
Thought Ellis all that is approved and right;
Then he was happy, and some envy drew,
For knowing more than other farmers knew;
They call'd him learned, and it sooth'd their pride,
While he in his was pleased and gratified.

Still more t' offend, he to the altar led
The vicar's niece, to early reading bred;
Who, though she freely ventured on the life,
Could never fully be the farmer's wife;
She had a softness, gentleness, and ease,
Sure a coarse mind to humble and displease:
O! had she never known a fault beside,
How vain their spite, how impotent their pride!

Three darling girls the happy couple bless'd,
Who now the sweetest lot of life possess'd;
For what can more a grateful spirit move
Than health, with competence, and peace, with love?

Ellis would sometimes, thriving man! retire
To the town inn, and quit the parlour fire;
But he was ever kind where'er he went,
And trifling sums in his amusements spent:
He bought, he thought for her—she should have been
content:
Oft, when he cash received at Smithfield mart,
At Cranbourn-alley he would leave a part;
And, if to town he follow'd what he sold,
Sure was his wife a present to behold.

Still, when his evenings at the inn were spent,
She mused at home in sullen discontent;
And, sighing, yielded to a wish that some
With social spirit to the farm would come·
There was a farmer in the place, whose name,
And skill in rural arts, was known to fame;
He had a pupil, by his landlord sent,
On terms that gave the parties much content;
The youth those arts, and those alone, should learn,
With aught beside his guide had no concern:
He might to neighb'ring towns or distant ride,
And there amusements seek without a guide:

With handsome prints his private room was graced,
His music there, and there his books were placed:
Men knew not if he farm'd, but they allow'd him taste.

Books, prints, and music, cease, at times, to charm,
And sometimes men can neither ride nor farm;
They look for kindred minds, and Cecil found,
In Farmer Ellis, one inform'd and sound;
But in his wife—I hate the fact I tell—
A lovely being, who could please too well:
And he was one who never would deny
Himself a pleasure, or indeed would try.

Early and well the wife of Ellis knew
Where danger was, and trembled at the view;
So evil spirits tremble, but are still
Evil, and lose not the rebellious will:
She sought not safety from the fancied crime,
"And why retreat before the dangerous time?"

Oft came the student of the farm and read,
And found his mind with more than reading fed:
This Ellis seeing, left them, or he staid,
As pleased him, not offended nor afraid:
He came in spirits with his girls to play,
Then ask excuse, and, laughing, walk away:

When, as he entered, Cecil ceased to read,
He would exclaim, " Proceed, my friend, proceed!"
Or, sometimes weary, would to bed retire,
And fear and anger by his ease inspire.

" My conversation does he then despise?
" Leaves he this slighted face for other eyes?"
So said Alicia; and she dwelt so long
Upon that thought, to leave her was to wrong.

Alas! the woman loved the soothing tongue,
That yet pronounced her beautiful and young;
The tongue that, seeming careless, ever praised;
The eye that roving, on her person gazed;
The ready service, on the watch to please;
And all such sweet, small courtesies as these.

Still there was virtue, but a rolling stone
On a hill's brow is not more quickly gone;
The slightest motion,—ceasing from our care,—
A moment's absence,—when we 're not aware,—
When down it rolls, and at the bottom lies,
Sunk, lost, degraded, never more to rise!
Far off the glorious height from whence it fell,
With all things base and infamous to dwell.

Friendship with woman is a dangerous thing—
Thence hopes avow'd and bold confessions spring:
Frailties confess'd to other frailties lead,
And new confessions new desires succeed;
And, when the friends have thus their hearts disclosed,
They find how little is to guilt opposed.

The foe's attack will on the fort begin,
When he is certain of a friend within.

When all was lost,—or, in the lover's sight,
When all was won,—the lady thought of flight.

"What! sink a slave?" she said, "and with deceit
"The rigid virtue of a husband meet?
"No! arm'd with death, I would his fury brave,
"And own the justice of the blow he gave!
"But thus to see him easy, careless, cold,
"And his confiding folly to behold;
"To feel incessant fears that he should read,
"In looks assumed, the cause whence they proceed,
"I cannot brook; nor will I here abide
"Till chance betrays the crime that shame would hide:

" Fly with me, Henry!" Henry sought in vain
To soothe her terrors and her griefs restrain:
He saw the lengths that women dared to go,
And fear'd the husband both as friend and foe.
Of farming weary—for the guilty mind
Can no resource in guiltless studies find,
Left to himself, his mother all unknown,
His titled father, loth the boy to own,
Had him to decent expectations bred,
A favour'd offspring of a lawless bed;
And would he censure one who should pursue
The way he took? Alicia yet was new:
Her passion pleased him: he agreed on flight:
They fix'd the method, and they chose the night.

Then, while the farmer read of public crimes,
Collating coolly Chronicles and Times,
The flight was taken by the guilty pair,
That made one passage in the columns there.

The heart of Ellis bled; the comfort, pride,
The hope and stay of his existence died;
Rage from the ruin of his peace arose,
And he would follow and destroy his foes;

Would with wild haste the guilty pair pursue,
And when he found—Good heaven! what would he do?

That wretched woman he would wildly seize,
And agonize her heart, his own to ease;
That guilty man would grasp, and in her sight
Insult his pangs, and her despair excite;
Bring death in view, and then the stroke suspend,
And draw out tortures till his life should end:
O! it should stand recorded in all time,
How they transgress'd, and he avenged the crime!

In this bad world should all his business cease,
He would not seek—he would not taste of peace;
But wrath should live till vengeance had her due,
And with his wrath his life should perish too.

His girls—not his—he would not be so weak—
Child was a word he never more must speak!
How did he know what villains had defiled
His honest bed?—He spurn'd the name of child:
Keep them he must; but he would coarsely hide
Their forms, and nip the growth of woman's pride;

He would consume their flesh, abridge their food,
And kill the mother-vices in their blood.

All this Sir Owen heard, and grieved for all;
He with the husband mourn'd Alicia's fall;
But urged the vengeance with a spirit strong,
As one whose own rose high against the wrong:
He saw his tenant by this passion moved,
Shared in his wrath, and his revenge approved.

Years now unseen, he mourn'd this tenant's fate,
And wonder'd how he bore his widow'd state;
Still he would mention Ellis with the pride
Of one who felt himself to worth allied:
Such were his notions—had been long, but now
He wish'd to see if vengeance lived, and how:
He doubted not a mind so strong must feel
Most righteously, and righteous measures deal.

Then would he go, and haply he might find
Some new excitement for a weary mind;
Might learn the miseries of a pair undone,
One scorn'd and hated, lost and perish'd one:

Yes, he would praise to virtuous anger give,
And so his vengeance should be nursed and live.

Ellis was glad to see his landlord come,
A transient joy broke in upon his gloom,
And pleased he led the knight to the superior room;
Where she was wont in happier days to sit,
Who paid with smiles his condescending wit.

There the sad husband, who had seldom been
Where prints acquired in happier days were seen,
Now struck by these, and carried to the past,
A painful look on every object cast:
Sir Owen saw his tenant's troubled state,
But still he wish'd to know the offenders' fate.

"Know you they suffer, Ellis?"—Ellis knew;—
"'Tis well! 'tis just! but have they all their due?
"Have they in mind and body, head and heart,
"Sustain'd the pangs of their accursed part?"

"They have!"—"'Tis well!"—"and wants enough to shake
"The firmest mind, the stoutest heart to break."

" But have you seen them in such misery dwell?"
" In misery past description."—" That is well."

" Alas! Sir Owen, it perhaps is just,—
" Yet I began my purpose to distrust;
" For they to justice have discharged a debt,
" That vengeance surely may her claim forget."

" Man, can you pity?"
" As a man I feel
" Miseries like theirs."
" But never would you heal?"

" Hear me, Sir Owen:—I had sought them long,
" Urged by the pain of ever present wrong,
" Yet had not seen; and twice the year came round—
" Years hateful now—ere I my victims found:
" But I did find them, in the dungeon's gloom
" Of a small garret—a precarious home,
" For that depended on the weekly pay,
" And they were sorely frighten'd on the day;
" But there they linger'd on from week to week,
" Haunted by ills of which 'tis hard to speak,

" For they are many and vexatious all,
" The very smallest—but they none were small.

" The roof, unceil'd in patches, gave the snow
" Entrance within, and there were heaps below;
" I pass'd a narrow region dark and cold,
" The strait of stairs to that infectious hold;
" And, when I enter'd, misery met my view
" In every shape she wears, in every hue,
" And the bleak icy blast across the dungeon flew;
" There frown'd the ruin'd walls that once were white;
" There gleam'd the panes that once admitted light;
" There lay unsavoury scraps of wretched food;
" And there a measure, void of fuel, stood;
" But who shall part by part describe the state
" Of these, thus follow'd by relentless fate?
" All, too, in winter, when the icy air
" Breathed its bleak venom on the guilty pair.

" That man, that Cecil!—he was left, it seems,
" Unnamed, unnoticed: farewell to his dreams!
" Heirs made by law rejected him of course,
" And left him neither refuge nor resource:—

" Their father's? No: he was the harlot's son
" Who wrong'd them, whom their duty bade them shun;
" And they were duteous all, and he was all undone.

" Now the lost pair, whom better times had led
" To part disputing, shared their sorrow's bed:
" Their bed!—I shudder as I speak—and shared
" Scraps to their hunger by the hungry spared."

" Man! my good Ellis! can you sigh?"—" I can:
" In short, Sir Owen, I must feel as man;
" And could you know the miseries they endured,
" The poor, uncertain pittance they procured;
" When, laid aside the needle and the pen,
" Their sickness won the neighbours of their den,
" Poor as they are, and they are passing poor,
" To lend some aid to those who needed more:
" Then, too, an ague with the winter came,
" And in this state—that wife I cannot name
" Brought forth a famish'd child of suffering and of shame.

" This had you known, and traced them to this scene,
" Where all was desolate, defiled, unclean,

" A fireless room, and, where a fire had place,
" The blast loud howling down the empty space,
" You must have felt a part of the distress,
" Forgot your wrongs, and made their suffering less!"

" Sought you them, Ellis, from the mean intent
" To give them succour?"
" What indeed I meant
" At first was vengeance; but I long pursued
" The pair, and I at last their misery view'd
" In that vile garret, which I cannot paint—
" The sight was loathsome, and the smell was faint;
" And there that wife,—whom I had loved so well,
" And thought so happy, was condemn'd to dwell;
" The gay, the grateful wife, whom I was glad
" To see in dress beyond our station clad,
" And to behold among our neighbours fine,
" More than perhaps became a wife of mine;
" And now among her neighbours to explore,
" And see her poorest of the very poor!—
" I would describe it, but I bore a part,
" Nor can explain the feelings of the heart;
" Yet memory since has aided me to trace
" The horrid features of that dismal place.

" There she reclined unmoved, her bosom bare
" To her companion's unimpassion'd stare,
" And my wild wonder:—Seat of virtue! chaste
" As lovely once! O! how wert thou disgraced!
" Upon that breast, by sordid rags defiled,
" Lay the wan features of a famish'd child;—
" That sin-born babe in utter misery laid,
" Too feebly wretched even to cry for aid;
" The ragged sheeting, o'er her person drawn,
" Served for the dress that hunger placed in pawn.

" At the bed's feet the man reclined his frame:
" Their chairs were perish'd to support the flame
" That warm'd his agued limbs; and, sad to see,
" That shook him fiercely as he gazed on me.

" I was confused in this unhappy view:
" My wife! my friend! I could not think it true;
" My children's mother,—my Alicia,—laid
" On such a bed! so wretched,—so afraid!
" And her gay, young seducer, in the guise
" Of all we dread, abjure, defy, despise,
" And all the fear and terror in his look,
" Still more my mind to its foundation shook.

" At last he spoke:—' Long since I would have died,
" ' But could not leave her, though for death I sigh'd,
" ' And tried the poison'd cup, and dropt it as I tried.

" ' She is a woman, and that famish'd thing
" ' Makes her to life, with all its evils, cling:
" ' Feed her, and let her breathe her last in peace,
" ' And all my sufferings with your promise cease!'

" Ghastly he smiled;—I knew not what I felt,
" But my heart melted—hearts of flint would melt,
" To see their anguish, penury, and shame,
" How base, how low, how groveling they became:
" I could not speak my purpose, but my eyes
" And my expression bade the creature rise.

" Yet, O! that woman's look! my words are vain
" Her mix'd and troubled feelings to explain;
" True, there was shame and consciousness of fall,
" But yet remembrance of my love withal,
" And knowledge of that power which she would now recal.

" But still the more that she to memory brought,
" The greater anguish in my mind was wrought;

" The more she tried to bring the past in view,
" She greater horror on the present threw;
" So that, for love or pity, terror thrill'd
" My blood, and vile and odious thoughts instill'd.

" This war within, these passions in their strife,
" If thus protracted, had exhausted life;
" But the strong view of these departed years
" Caused a full burst of salutary tears,
" And as I wept at large, and thought alone,
" I felt my reason re-ascend her throne."

" My friend!" Sir Owen answer'd, " what became
" Of your just anger?—when you saw their shame,
" It was your triumph, and you should have shown
" Strength, if not joy—their sufferings were their own."

" Alas, for them! their own in very deed!
" And they of mercy had the greater need;
" Their own by purchase, for their frailty paid,—
" And wanted heaven's own justice human aid?
" And seeing this, could I beseech my God
" For deeper misery, and a heavier rod?"

" But could you help them?"—" Think, Sir Owen, how
" I saw them then—methinks I see them now!
" She had not food, nor aught a mother needs,
" Who for another life and dearer feeds:
" I saw her speechless; on her wither'd breast
" The wither'd child extended, but not prest,
" Who sought, with moving lip and feeble cry,
" Vain instinct! for the fount without supply.

" Sure it was all a grievous, odious scene,
" Where all was dismal, melancholy, mean,
" Foul with compell'd neglect, unwholesome, and unclean;
" That arm,—that eye,—the cold, the sunken cheek,—
" Spoke all, Sir Owen—fiercely miseries speak!"

" And you relieved?"
" If hell's seducing crew
" Had seen that sight, they must have pitied too."

" Revenge was thine—thou hadst the power, the right;
" To give it up was heaven's own act to slight."

" Tell me not, sir, of rights, and wrongs, or powers!
" I felt it written—Vengeance is not ours!"

" Well, Ellis, well!—I find these female foes,
" Or good or ill, will murder our repose;
" And we, when Satan tempts them, take the cup,
" The fruit of their foul sin, and drink it up:
" But shall our pity all our claims remit,
" And we the sinners of their guilt acquit?"

" And what, Sir Owen, will our vengeance do?
" It follows us when we our foe pursue,
" And, as we strike the blow, it smites the smiters too."

" What didst thou, man?"
" I brought them to a cot
" Behind your larches,—a sequester'd spot,
" Where dwells the woman: I believe her mind
" Is now enlighten'd—I am sure resign'd:
" She gave her infant, though with aching heart
" And faltering spirit, to be nursed apart."

" And that vile scoundrel"——
" Nay, his name restore,
" And call him Cecil,—for he is no more:
" When my vain help was offer'd, he was past
" All human aid, and shortly breathed his last;

" But his heart open'd, and he lived to see
" Guilt in himself, and find a friend in me.

" Strange was their parting, parting on the day
" I offer'd help, and took the man away,
" Sure not to meet again, and not to live
" And taste of joy—He feebly cried, ' Forgive!
" ' I have thy guilt, thou mine, but now adieu!
" ' Tempters and tempted! what will thence ensue
" ' I know not, dare not think!'—He said, and he withdrew."

" But, Ellis, tell me, didst thou thus desire
" To heap upon their heads those coals of fire?"

" If fire to melt, that feeling is confest,—
" If fire to shame, I let that question rest;
" But if aught more the sacred words imply,
" I know it not—no commentator I."

" Then did you freely from your soul forgive?"—

" Sure as I hope before my Judge to live,
" Sure as I trust his mercy to receive,
" Sure as his word I honour and believe,

" Sure as the Saviour died upon the tree
" For all who sin,—for that dear wretch and me,—
" Whom never more on earth will I forsake or see."

Sir Owen softly to his bed adjourn'd,
Sir Owen quickly to his home return'd;
And all the way he meditating dwelt
On what this man in his affliction felt;
How he, resenting first, forbore, forgave,
His passion's lord, and not his anger's slave:
And as he rode he seem'd to fear the deed
Should not be done, and urged unwonted speed.

Arrived at home, he scorn'd the change to hide,
Nor would indulge a mean and selfish pride,
That would some little at a time recal
Th' avenging vow; he now was frankness all:
He saw his nephew, and with kindness spoke—
" Charles, I repent my purpose, and revoke;
" Take her—I 'm taught, and would I could repay
" The generous teacher; hear me, and obey:
" Bring me the dear coquette, and let me vow
" On lips half perjured to be passive now:

" Take her, and let me thank the powers divine
" She was not stolen when her hand was mine,
" Or when her heart—Her smiles I must forget,
" She my revenge, and cancel either debt."

Here ends our tale, for who will doubt the bliss
Of ardent lovers in a case like this?
And if Sir Owen's was not half so strong,
It may, perchance, continue twice as long.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIII.

DELAY HAS DANGER.

Morning Excursion—Lady at Silford, who?—Reflections on Delay—Cecilia and Henry—The Lovers contracted—Visit to the Patron—Whom he finds there—Fanny described—The yielding of Vanity—Delay—Resentment—Want of Resolution—Further Entanglement—Danger—How met—Conclusion.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIII.

DELAY HAS DANGER.

THREE weeks had past, and Richard rambles now
Far as the dinners of the day allow;
He rode to Farley Grange and Finley Mere,
That house so ancient, and that lake so clear:
He rode to Ripley through that river gay,
Where in the shallow stream the loaches play,
And stony fragments stay the winding stream,
And gilded pebbles at the bottom gleam,
Giving their yellow surface to the sun,
And making proud the waters as they run:
It is a lovely place, and at the side
Rises a mountain-rock in rugged pride;
And in that rock are shapes of shells, and forms
Of creatures in old worlds, of nameless worms,

Whose generations lived and died ere man,
A worm of other class, to crawl began.

There is a town call'd Silford, where his steed
Our traveller rested—He the while would feed
His mind by walking to and fro, to meet,
He knew not what adventure, in the street:
A stranger there, but yet a window-view
Gave him a face that he conceived he knew;
He saw a tall, fair, lovely lady, dress'd
As one whom taste and wealth had jointly bless'd;
He gazed, but soon a footman at the door
Thundering, alarm'd her, who was seen no more.

" This was the lady whom her lover bound
" In solemn contract, and then proved unsound:
" Of this affair I have a clouded view,
" And should be glad to have it clear'd by you."

So Richard spake, and instant George replied,
" I had the story from the injured side,
" But when resentment and regret were gone,
" And pity (shaded by contempt) came on.

" Frail was the hero of my tale, but still
" Was rather drawn by accident than will;
" Some without meaning into guilt advance,
" From want of guard, from vanity, from chance;
" Man's weakness flies his more immediate pain,
" A little respite from his fears to gain;
" And takes the part that he would gladly fly,
" If he had strength and courage to deny.

" But now my tale, and let the moral say,
" When hope can sleep, there's danger in delay.
" Not that for rashness, Richard, I would plead,
" For unadvised alliance: No, indeed:
" Think ere the contract—but, contracted, stand
" No more debating, take the ready hand:
" When hearts are willing, and when fears subside,
" Trust not to time, but let the knot be tied;
" For when a lover has no more to do,
" He thinks in leisure, what shall I pursue?
" And then who knows what objects come in view?
" For when, assured, the man has nought to keep
" His wishes warm and active, then they sleep:
" Hopes die with fears; and then a man must lose
" All the gay visions, and delicious views,

" Once his mind's wealth! He travels at his ease,
" Nor horrors now nor fairy-beauty sees;
" When the kind goddess gives the wish'd assent,
" No mortal business should the deed prevent;
" But the blest youth should legal sanction seek
" Ere yet th' assenting blush has fled the cheek.

" And—hear me, Richard,—man has reptile-pride
" That often rises when his fears subside;
" When, like a trader feeling rich, he now
" Neglects his former smile, his humble bow,
" And, conscious of his hoarded wealth, assumes
" New airs, nor thinks how odious he becomes.

" There is a wandering, wavering train of thought
" That something seeks where nothing should be sought,
" And will a self-delighted spirit move
" To dare the danger of pernicious love.

" First be it granted all was duly said
" By the fond youth to the believing maid;
" Let us suppose with many a sigh there came
" The declaration of the deathless flame;—

" And so her answer—' She was happy then,
" ' Blest in herself, and did not think of men;
" ' And with such comforts in her present state,
" ' A wish to change it was to tempt her fate;
" ' That she would not; but yet she would confess
" ' With him she thought her hazard would be less;
" ' Nay, more, she would esteem, she would regard express:
" ' But to be brief—if he could wait and see
" ' In a few years what his desires would be.' "—

Henry for years read months, then weeks, nor found
The lady thought his judgment was unsound;
" For months read weeks," she read it to his praise,
And had some thoughts of changing it to *days*.

And here a short excursion let me make,
A lover tried, I think, for lovers' sake;
And teach the meaning in a lady's mind
When you can none in her expressions find:
Words are design'd that meaning to convey,
But often *Yea* is hidden in a *Nay!*
And what the charmer wills, some gentle hints betray.

Then, too, when ladies mean to yield at length,
They match their reasons with the lover's strength,
And, kindly cautious, will no force employ
But such as he can baffle or destroy.

As when heroic lovers beauty woo'd,
And were by magic's mighty art withstood,
The kind historian, for the dame afraid,
Gave to the faithful knight the stronger aid.

A downright *No!* would make a man despair,
Or leave for kinder nymph the cruel fair;
But "*No!* because I'm very happy now,
"Because I dread th' irrevocable vow,
"Because I fear papa will not approve,
"Because I love not—No, I cannot love;
"Because you men of Cupid make a jest,
"Because——in short, a single life is best."
A *No!* when back'd by reasons of such force,
Invites approach, and will recede of course.

Ladies, like towns besieged, for honour's sake,
Will some defence or its appearance make;

On first approach there 's much resistance made,
And conscious weakness hides in bold parade;
With lofty looks, and threat'nings stern and proud,
" Come, if you dare," is said in language loud,
But if th' attack be made with care and skill,
" Come," says the yielding party, " if you will;"
Then each the other's valiant acts approve,
And twine their laurels in a wreath of love.—

We now retrace our tale, and forward go,—
Thus Henry rightly read Cecilia's No!
His prudent father, who had duly weigh'd,
And well approved the fortune of the maid,
Not much resisted, just enough to show
He knew his power, and would his son should know.

" Harry, I will, while I your bargain make,
" That you a journey to our patron take:
" I know her guardian; care will not become
" A lad when courting; as you must be dumb,
" You may be absent; I for you will speak,
" And ask what you are not supposed to seek."

Then came the parting hour, and what arise
When lovers part! expressive looks and eyes,

Tender and tear-full,—many a fond adieu,
And many a call the sorrow to renew;
Sighs such as lovers only can explain,
And words that they might undertake in vain.

Cecilia liked it not; she had, in truth,
No mind to part with her enamour'd youth;
But thought it foolish thus themselves to cheat,
And part for nothing but again to meet.

Now Henry's father was a man whose heart
Took with his interest a decided part;
He know his lordship, and was known for acts
That I omit,—they were acknowledged facts;
An interest somewhere; I the place forget,
And the good deed—no matter—'twas a debt:
Thither must Henry, and in vain the maid
Express'd dissent—the father was obey'd.

But though the maid was by her fears assail'd,
Her reason rose against them, and prevail'd;
Fear saw him hunting, leaping, falling—led,
Maim'd and disfigured, groaning to his bed;
Saw him in perils, duels,—dying,—dead.

But Prudence answer'd, " Is not every maid
" With equal cause for him she loves afraid?"
And from her guarded mind Cecilia threw
The groundless terrors that will love pursue.

She had no doubts, and her reliance strong
Upon the honour that she would not wrong:
Firm in herself, she doubted not the truth
Of him, the chosen, the selected youth;
Trust of herself a trust in him supplied,
And she believed him faithful, though untried:
On her he might depend, in him she would confide.

If some fond girl express'd a tender pain
Lest some fair rival should allure her swain,
To such she answer'd, with a look severe,
" Can one you doubt be worthy of your fear?"

My lord was kind,—a month had pass'd away,
And Henry stay'd,—he sometimes named a day;
But still my lord was kind, and Henry still must stay:
His father's words to him were words of fate—
" Wait, 'tis your duty; 'tis my pleasure, wait!"

In all his walks, in hilly heath or wood,
Cecilia's form the pensive youth pursued;
In the gray morning, in the silent noon,
In the soft twilight, by the sober moon,
In those forsaken rooms, in that immense saloon;
And he, now fond of that seclusion grown,
There reads her letters, and there writes his own.

"Here none approach," said he, "to interfere,
"But I can think of my Cecilia here!"

But there did come—and how it came to pass
Who shall explain?—a mild and blue-eyed lass;—
It was the work of accident, no doubt—
The cause unknown—we say, "as things fall out;"—
The damsel enter'd there, in wand'ring round about:
At first she saw not Henry; and she ran,
As from a ghost, when she beheld a man.

She was esteem'd a beauty through the hall,
And so admitted, with consent of all;
And, like a treasure, was her beauty kept
From every guest who in the mansion slept;

Whether as friends who join'd the noble pair,
Or those invited by the steward there.

She was the daughter of a priest, whose life
Was brief and sad: he lost a darling wife,
And Fanny then her father, who could save
But a small portion; but his all he gave,
With the fair orphan, to a sister's care,
And her good spouse: they were the ruling pair—
Steward and steward's lady—o'er a tribe,
Each under each, whom I shall not describe.

This grave old couple, childless and alone,
Would, by their care, for Fanny's loss atone:
She had been taught in schools of honest fame;
And to the hall, as to a home, she came,
My lord assenting: yet, as meet and right,
Fanny was held from every hero's sight,
Who might in youthful error cast his eyes
On one so gentle as a lawful prize,
On border land, whom, as their right or prey,
A youth from either side might bear away.
Some handsome lover of th' inferior class
Might as a wife approve the lovely lass;

Or some invader from the class above,
Who, more presuming, would his passion prove
By asking less—love only for his love.

This much experienced aunt her fear express'd,
And dread of old and young, of host and guest.

" Go not, my Fanny, in their way," she cried,
" It is not right that virtue should be tried;
" So, to be safe, be ever at my side."

She was not ever at that side; but still
Observed her precepts, and obey'd her will.

But in the morning's dawn and evening's gloom
She could not lock the damsel in her room;
And Fanny thought, " I will ascend these stairs
" To see the chapel,—there are none at prayers;
" None," she believed, " had yet to dress return'd,
" By whom a timid girl might be discern'd:"
In her slow motion, looking, as she glides,
On pictures, busts, and what she met besides,
And speaking softly to herself alone,
Or singing low in melancholy tone;

And thus she rambled through the still domain,
Room after room, again, and yet again.

But, to retrace our story, still we say,
To this saloon the maiden took her way;
Where she beheld our youth, and frighten'd ran,
And so their friendship in her fear began.

But dare she thither once again advance,
And still suppose the man will think it chance?
Nay, yet again, and what has chance to do
With this?—I know not: doubtless Fanny knew.

Now, of the meeting of a modest maid
And sober youth why need we be afraid?
And when a girl's amusements are so few
As Fanny's were, what would you have her do?
Reserved herself, a decent youth to find,
And just be civil, sociable, and kind,
And look together at the setting sun,
Then at each other—What the evil done?

Then Fanny took my little lord to play,
And bade him not intrude on Henry's way:

" O, he intrudes not!" said the youth, and grew
Fond of the child, and would amuse him too;
Would make such faces, and assume such looks—
He loved it better than his gayest books.

When man with man would an acquaintance seek,
He will his thoughts in chosen language speak;
And they converse on divers themes, to find
If they possess a corresponding mind;
But man with woman has foundation laid,
And built up friendship ere a word is said:
'Tis not with words that they their wishes tell,
But with a language answering quite as well;
And thus they find, when they begin t' explore
Their way by speech, they knew it all before.

And now it chanced again the pair, when dark,
Met in their way, when wandering in the park;
Not in the common path, for so they might,
Without a wonder, wander day or night;
But, when in pathless ways their chance will bring
A musing pair, we do admire the thing.

The youth in meeting read the damsel's face,
As if he meant her inmost thoughts to trace;

On which her colour changed, as if she meant
To give her aid, and help his kind intent.

Both smiled and parted, but they did not speak—
The smile implied, " Do tell me what you seek :"
They took their different ways with erring feet,
And met again, surprised that they could meet ;
Then must they speak—and something of the air
Is always ready—" 'Tis extremely fair !"

" It was so pleasant !" Henry said ; " the beam
" Of that sweet light so brilliant on the stream ;
" And chiefly yonder, where that old cascade
" Has for an age its simple music made ;
" All so delightful, soothing, and serene !
" Do you not feel it ? not enjoy the scene ?
" Something it has that words will not express,
" But rather hide, and make th' enjoyment less :
" 'Tis what our souls conceive, 'tis what our hearts
confess."

Poor Fanny's heart at these same words confess'd
How well he painted, and how rightly guess'd ;

And, while they stood admiring their retreat,
Henry found something like a mossy seat;
But Fanny sat not; no, she rather pray'd
That she might leave him, she was so afraid.

" Not, sir, of you; your goodness I can trust,
" But folks are so censorious and unjust,
" They make no difference, they pay no regard
" To our true meaning, which is very hard
" And very cruel; great the pain it cost
" To lose such pleasure, but it must be lost:
" Did people know how free from thought of ill
" One's meaning is, their malice would be still."

At this she wept; at least a glittering gem
Shone in each eye, and there was fire in them,
For as they fell, the sparkles, at his feet,
He felt emotions very warm and sweet.

" A lovely creature! not more fair than good,
" By all admired, by some, it seems, pursued,
" Yet self-protected by her virtue's force
" And conscious truth—What evil in discourse

" With one so guarded, who is pleased to trust
" Herself with me, reliance strong and just?"

Our lover then believed he must not seem
Cold to the maid who gave him her esteem;
Not manly this; Cecilia had his heart,
But it was lawful with his time to part;
It would be wrong in her to take amiss
A virtuous friendship for a girl like this;
False or disloyal he would never prove,
But kindness here took nothing from his love:
Soldiers to serve a foreign prince are known,
When not on present duty to their own;
So, though our bosom's queen we still prefer,
We are not always on our knees to her.
" Cecilia present, witness yon fair moon,
" And yon bright orbs, that fate would change as soon
" As my devotion; but the absent sun
" Cheers us no longer when his course is run;
" And then those starry twinklers may obtain
" A little worship till he shines again."

The father still commanded " Wait awhile,"
And the son answer'd in submissive style,

Grieved, but obedient; and obedience teased
His lady's spirit more than grieving pleased:
That he should grieve in absence was most fit,
But not that he to absence should submit;
And in her letters might be traced reproof,
Distant indeed, but visible enough;
This should the wandering of his heart have stay'd;
Alas! the wanderer was the vainer made.

The parties daily met, as by consent,
And yet it always seem'd by accident;
Till in the nymph the shepherd had been blind
If he had fail'd to see a manner kind,
With that expressive look, that seem'd to say,
"You do not speak, and yet you see you may."

O! yes, he saw, and he resolved to fly,
And blamed his heart, unwilling to comply:
He sometimes wonder'd how it came to pass,
That he had all this freedom with the lass;
Reserved herself, with strict attention kept,
And care and vigilance that never slept:
"How is it thus that they a beauty trust
"With me, who feel the confidence is just?

" And they, too, feel it; yes, they may confide,"—
He said in folly, and he smiled in pride.

'Tis thus our secret passions work their way,
And the poor victims know not they obey.

Familiar now became the wandering pair,
And there was pride and joy in Fanny's air;
For though his silence did not please the maid,
She judged him only modest and afraid;
The gentle dames are ever pleased to find
Their lovers dreading they should prove unkind;
So, blind by hope, and pleased with prospects gay,
The generous beauty gave her heart away
Before he said, " I love!"—alas! he dared not say.

Cecilia yet was mistress of his mind,
But oft he wish'd her, like his Fanny, kind;
Her fondness sooth'd him, for the man was vain,
And he perceived that he could give her pain:
Cecilia liked not to profess her love,
But Fanny ever was the yielding dove;
Tender and trusting, waiting for the word,
And then prepared to hail her bosom's lord.

Cecilia once her honest love avow'd,
To make him happy, not to make him proud;
But she would not, for every asking sigh,
Confess the flame that waked his vanity;
But this poor maiden, every day and hour,
Would, by fresh kindness, feed the growing power;
And he indulged, vain being! in the joy,
That he alone could raise it, or destroy;
A present good, from which he dared not fly,
Cecilia absent, and his Fanny by.

O! vain desire of youth, that in the hour
Of strong temptation, when he feels the power,
And knows how daily his desires increase,
Yet will he wait, and sacrifice his peace,
Will trust to chance to free him from the snare,
Of which, long since, his conscience said, beware!
Or look for strange deliverance from that ill,
That he might fly, could he command the will!
How can he freedom from the future seek,
Who feels already that he grows too weak?
And thus refuses to resist, till time
Removes the power, and makes the way for crime:
Yet thoughts he had, and he would think, " Forego
" My dear Cecilia? not for kingdoms! No!

" But may I, ought I not the friend to be
" Of one who feels this fond regard for me?
" I wrong no creature by a kindness lent
" To one so gentle, mild, and innocent;
" And for that fair one, whom I still adore,
" By feeling thus I think of her the more;"
And not unlikely, for our thoughts will tend
To those whom we are conscious we offend.

Had Reason whisper'd, " Has Cecilia leave
" Some gentle youth in friendship to receive,
" And be to him the friend that you appear
" To this soft girl?—would not some jealous fear
" Proclaim your thoughts, that he approach'd too near?"

But Henry, blinded still, presumed to write
Of one in whom Cecilia would delight;
A mild and modest girl, a gentle friend,
If, as he hoped, her kindness would descend—
But what he fear'd to lose or hoped to gain
By writing thus, he had been ask'd in vain.

It was his purpose, every morn he rose,
The dangerous friendship he had made to close;

It was his torment nightly, ere he slept,
To feel his prudent purpose was not kept.

True, he has wonder'd why the timid maid
Meets him so often, and is not afraid;
And why that female dragon, fierce and keen,
Has never in their private walks been seen;
And often he has thought, "What can their silence
mean?

"They can have no design, or plot, or plan,—
"In fact, I know not how the thing began,—
"'Tis their dependence on my credit here,
"And fear not, nor, in fact, have cause to fear."

But did that pair, who seem'd to think that all
Unwatch'd will wander and unguarded fall,
Did they permit a youth and maid to meet
Both unreproved? were they so indiscreet?

This sometimes enter'd Henry's mind, and then,
"Who shall account for women or for men?"
He said, "or who their secret thoughts explore?
"Why do I vex me? I will think no more."

My lord of late had said, in manner kind,
" My good friend Harry, do not think us blind!"
Letters had past, though he had nothing seen,
His careful father and my lord between;
But to what purpose was to him unknown—
It might be borough business, or their own.

Fanny, it seem'd, was now no more in dread,
If one approach'd, she neither fear'd nor fled:
He mused on this,—" But wherefore her alarm?
" She knows me better, and she dreads no harm."

Something his father wrote that gave him pain:
" I know not, son, if you should yet remain;—
" Be cautious, Harry, favours to procure
" We strain a point, but we must first be sure:
" Love is a folly,—that, indeed, is true,—
" But something still is to our honour due,
" So I must leave the thing to my good lord and you."

But from Cecilia came remonstrance strong:
" You write too darkly, and you stay too long;
" We hear reports; and, Henry,—mark me well,—
" I heed not every tale that triflers tell;—

" Be you no trifler; dare not to believe
" That I am one whom words and vows deceive:
" You know your heart, your hazard you will learn,
" And this your trial——instantly return."

" Unjust, injurious, jealous, cruel maid!
" Am I a slave, of haughty words afraid?
" Can she who thus commands expect to be obey'd?
" O! how unlike this dear assenting soul,
" Whose heart a man might at his will control!"

Uneasy, anxious, fill'd with self-reproof,
He now resolved to quit his patron's roof;
And then again his vacillating mind
To stay resolved, and that her pride should find:
Debating thus, his pen the lover took,
And chose the words of anger and rebuke.

Again, yet once again, the conscious pair
Met, and " O, speak!" was Fanny's silent prayer;
And, " I must speak," said the embarrass'd youth,
" Must save my honour, must confess the truth:
" Then I must lose her; but, by slow degrees,
" She will regain her peace, and I my ease."

Ah! foolish man! to virtue true nor vice,
He buys distress, and self-esteem the price;
And what his gain?—a tender smile and sigh
From a fond girl to feed his vanity.

Thus, every day they lived, and every time
They met, increased his anguish and his crime.

Still in their meetings they were ofttimes nigh
The darling theme, and then past trembling by;
On those occasions Henry often tried
For the sad truth—and then his heart denied
The utterance due: thus daily he became
The prey of weakness, vanity, and shame.

But soon a day, that was their doubts to close,
On the fond maid and thoughtless youth arose.

Within the park, beside the bounding brook,
The social pair their usual ramble took;
And there the steward found them: they could trace
News in his look, and gladness in his face.

He was a man of riches, bluff and big,
With clean brown broad-cloth, and with white cut wig:

He bore a cane of price, with riband tied,
And a fat spaniel waddled at his side:
To every being whom he met he gave
His looks expressive; civil, gay, or grave,
But condescending all; and each declared
How much he govern'd, and how well he fared.

This great man bow'd, not humbly, but his bow
Appear'd familiar converse to allow:
The trembling Fanny, as he came in view,
Within the chestnut grove in fear withdrew;
While Henry wonder'd, not without a fear,
Of that which brought th' important man so near:
Doubt was dispersed by—" My esteem'd young man!"
As he with condescending grace began ——

" Though you with youthful frankness nobly trust
" Your Fanny's friends, and doubtless think them just;
" Though you have not, with craving soul, applied
" To us, and ask'd the fortune of your bride,
" Be it our care that you shall not lament
" That love has made you so improvident.

" An orphan maid——Your patience! you shall have
" Your time to speak, I now attention crave;—

" Fanny, dear girl! has in my spouse and me
" Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
" None of the poorest——nay, sir, no reply,
" You shall not need——and we are born to die:
" And one yet crawls on earth, of whom, I say,
" That what he has he cannot take away;
" Her mother's father, one who has a store
" Of this world's good, and always looks for more;
" But, next his money, loves the girl at heart,
" And she will have it when they come to part."

" Sir," said the youth, his terrors all awake,
" Hear me, I pray, I beg,—for mercy's sake!
" Sir, were the secrets of my soul confess'd,
" Would you admit the truths that I protest
" Are such——your pardon"——
" Pardon! good, my friend,
" I not alone will pardon, I commend:
" Think you that I have no remembrance left
" Of youthful love, and Cupid's cunning theft?
" How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,
" How hearts are gain'd, and how exchange is made?—
" Come, sir, your hand"——
" In mercy, hear me now!"
" I cannot hear you, time will not allow:

" You know my station, what on me depends,
" For ever needed—but we part as friends;
" And here comes one who will the whole explain,
" My better self—and we shall meet again."

" Sir, I entreat"——
" Then be entreaty made
" To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
" A little teasing, but she will comply,
" And loves her niece too fondly to deny."

" O! he is mad, and miserable I!"
Exclaim'd the youth; " But let me now collect
" My scatter'd thoughts, I something must effect."

Hurrying she came—" Now, what has he confess'd,
" Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
" What! he has grieved you! Yet he, too, approves
" The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.

" But now for business: tell me, did you think
" That we should always at your meetings wink?
" Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring
" To me all secrets—O, you wicked thing!

" Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
" All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
" And hide your secret, said I, if you dare!
" So out it came, like an affrighten'd hare.

" Miss! said I, gravely; and the trembling maid
" Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
" And then she wept;—now, do remember this,
" Never to chide her when she does amiss;
" For she is tender as the callow bird,
" And cannot bear to have her temper stirr'd;—
" Fanny, I said, then whisper'd her the name,
" And caused such looks—Yes, yours are just the same;
" But hear my story—When your love was known
" For this our child—she is, in fact, our own—
" Then, first debating, we agreed at last
" To seek my lord, and tell him what had past."

" To tell the earl?"
" Yes, truly, and why not?
" And then together we contrived our plot."

" Eternal God!"
" Nay, be not so surprised,—
" In all the matter we were well advised;

" We saw my lord, and Lady Jane was there,
" And said to Johnson, ' Johnson, take a chair :'
" True, we are servants in a certain way,
" But in the higher places so are they ;
" We are obey'd in ours, and they in theirs obey—
" So Johnson bow'd, for that was right and fit,
" And had no scruple with the earl to sit—
" Why look you so impatient while I tell
" What they debated ?—you must like it well.

" ' Let them go on,' our gracious earl began ;
" ' They will go off,' said, joking, my good man :
" ' Well!' said the countess,—she 's a lover's friend,—
" ' What if they do, they make the speedier end'——
" But be you more composed, for that dear child
" Is with her joy and apprehension wild :
" O! we have watch'd you on from day to day,
' There go the lovers !' we were wont to say—
" But why that look ?"—
" Dear madam, I implore
" A single moment!"
" I can give no more :
" Here are your letters—that 's a female pen,
" Said I to Fanny—' 'tis his sister's, then,'

" Replied the maid.—No! never must you stray;
" Or hide your wanderings, if you should, I pray;
" I know, at least I fear, the best may err,
" But keep the by-walks of your life from her:
" That youth should stray is nothing to be told,
" When they have sanction in the grave and old,
" Who have no call to wander and transgress,
" But very love of change and wantonness.

" I prattle idly, while your letters wait,
" And then my lord has much that he would state,
" All good to you—do clear that clouded face,
" And with good looks your lucky lot embrace.

" Now, mind that none with her divide your heart,
" For she would die ere lose the smallest part;
" And I rejoice that all has gone so well,
" For who th' effect of Johnson's rage can tell?
" He had his fears when you began to meet,
" But I assured him there was no deceit:
" He is a man who kindness will requite,
" But injured once, revenge is his delight;
" And he would spend the best of his estates
" To ruin, goods and body, them he hates;

" While he is kind enough when he approves
" A deed that's done, and serves the man he loves:
" Come, read your letters—I must now be gone,
" And think of matters that are coming on."

Henry was lost,—his brain confused, his soul
Dismay'd and sunk, his thoughts beyond control;
Borne on by terror, he foreboding read
Cecilia's letter! and his courage fled;
All was a gloomy, dark, and dreadful view,
He felt him guilty, but indignant too:—
And as he read, he felt the high disdain
Of injured men—" She may repent, in vain."

Cecilia much had heard, and told him all
That scandal taught—" A servant at the hall,
" Or servant's daughter, in the kitchen bred,
" Whose father would not with her mother wed,
" Was now his choice! a blushing fool, the toy,
" Or the attempted, both of man and boy;
" More than suspected, but without the wit
" Or the allurements for such creatures fit;
" Not virtuous though unfeeling, cold as ice
" And yet not chaste, the weeping fool of vice;

" Yielding, not tender; feeble, not refined;
" Her form insipid, and without a mind.

" Rival! she spurn'd the word; but let him stay,
" Warn'd as he was! beyond the present day,
" Whate'er his patron might object to this,
" The uncle-butler, or the weeping miss—
" Let him from this one single day remain,
" And then return! he would to her, in vain;
" There let him then abide, to earn, or crave
" Food undeserved! and be with slaves a slave."

Had reason guided anger, govern'd zeal,
Or chosen words to make a lover feel,
She might have saved him—anger and abuse
Will but defiance and revenge produce.

" Unjust and cruel, insolent and proud!"
He said, indignant, and he spoke aloud.
" Butler! and servant! Gentlest of thy sex,
" Thou wouldst not thus a man who loved thee vex;
" Thou wouldst not thus to vile report give ear,
" Nor thus enraged for fancied crimes appear;
" I know not what, dear maid!—if thy soft smiles were
here."

And then, that instant, there appear'd the maid,
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd;
Such timid sweetness, and so wrong'd, did more
Than all her pleading tenderness before.

In that weak moment, when disdain and pride,
And fear and fondness, drew the man aside,
In this weak moment—" Wilt thou," he began,
" Be mine?" and joy o'er all her features ran;
" I will!" she softly whisper'd; but the roar
Of cannon would not strike his spirit more;
Ev'n as his lips the lawless contract seal'd
He felt that conscience lost her seven-fold shield,
And honour fled; but still he spoke of love,
And all was joy in the consenting dove.

That evening all in fond discourse was spent,
When the sad lover to his chamber went,
To think on what had past, to grieve and to repent:
Early he rose, and look'd with many a sigh
On the red light that fill'd the eastern sky;
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day:
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,

And the cold stream curl'd onward as the gale
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,
When now the young are rear'd, and when the old,
Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold—
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen;
Before him swallows, gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights, and twitter'd on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.

Not much remain'd; for money and my lord
Soon made the father of the youth accord;
His prudence half resisted, half obey'd,
And scorn kept still the guardians of the maid:
Cecilia never on the subject spoke,
She seem'd as one who from a dream awoke;

So all was peace, and soon the married pair
Fix'd with fair fortune in a mansion fair.

Five years had past, and what was Henry then?
The most repining of repenting men;
With a fond, teasing, anxious wife, afraid
Of all attention to another paid;
Yet powerless she her husband to amuse,
Lives but t' entreat, implore, resent, accuse;
Jealous and tender, conscious of defects,
She merits little, and yet much expects;
She looks for love that now she cannot see,
And sighs for joy that never more can be;
On his retirements her complaints intrude,
And fond reproof endears his solitude:
While he her weakness (once her kindness) sees,
And his affections in her languor freeze;
Regret, uncheck'd by hope, devours his mind,
He feels unhappy, and he grows unkind.

" Fool! to be taken by a rosy cheek,
" And eyes that cease to sparkle or to speak;
" Fool! for this child my freedom to resign,
" When one the glory of her sex was mine;

" While from this burthen to my soul I hide,
" To think what Fate has dealt, and what denied.

" What fiend possess'd me when I tamely gave
" My forced assent to be an idiot's slave?
" Her beauty vanish'd, what for me remains?
" Th' eternal clicking of the galling chains:
" Her person truly I may think my own,
" Seen without pleasure, without triumph shown:
" Doleful she sits, her children at her knees,
" And gives up all her feeble powers to please;
" Whom I, unmoved, or moved with scorn, behold,
" Melting as ice, as vapid and as cold."

Such was his fate, and he must yet endure
The self-contempt that no self-love can cure:
Some business call'd him to a wealthy town
When unprepared for more than Fortune's frown;
There at a house he gave his luckless name,
The master absent, and Cecilia came;
Unhappy man! he could not, dared not speak,
But look'd around, as if retreat to seek:
This she allow'd not; but, with brow severe,
Ask'd him his business, sternly bent to hear;

He had no courage, but he view'd that face
As if he sought for sympathy and grace;
As if some kind returning thought to trace:
In vain; not long he waited, but with air,
That of all grace compell'd him to despair,
She rang the bell, and, when a servant came,
Left the repentant traitor to his shame;
But, going, spoke, "Attend this person out,
"And if he speaks, hear what he comes about!"
Then, with cool curtesy, from the room withdrew,
That seem'd to say, "Unhappy man, adieu!"

Thus will it be when man permits a vice
First to invade his heart, and then entice;
When wishes vain and undefined arise,
And that weak heart deceive, seduce, surprise;
When evil Fortune works on Folly's side,
And rash Resentment adds a spur to Pride;
Then life's long troubles from those actions come,
In which a moment may decide our doom.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIV.

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE.

The Rector of the Parish—His Manner of teaching—Of living—Richard's Correspondence—The Letters received—Love that survives Marriage—That dies in consequence—That is permitted to die for Want of Care—Henry and Emma, a Dialogue—Complaints on either Side—And Replies—Mutual Accusation—Defence of acknowledged Error—Means of restoring Happiness—The one to be adopted.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIV.

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE.

Richard one month had with his brother been,
And had his guests, his friends, his favourites seen;
Had heard the rector, who with decent force,
But not of action, aided his discourse:
"A moral teacher!" some, contemptuous, cried;
He smiled, but nothing of the fact denied,
Nor, save by his fair life, to charge so strong replied.
Still, though he bade them not on aught rely
That was their own, but all their worth deny,
They call'd his pure advice his cold morality;
And though he felt that earnestness and zeal,
That made some portion of his hearers feel,
Nay, though he loved the minds of men to lead
To the great points that form the Christian's creed,

Still he offended, for he would discuss
Points that to him seem'd requisite for us;
And urge his flock to virtue, though he knew
The very heathen taught the virtues too:
Nor was this moral minister afraid
To ask of inspiration's self the aid
Of truths by him so sturdily maintain'd,
That some confusion in the parish reign'd;
"Heathens," they said, "can tell us right from wrong,
"But to a Christian higher points belong."
Yet Jacques proceeded, void of fear and shame,
In his old method, and obtain'd the name
Of *Moral Preacher*—yet they all agreed,
Whatever error had defiled his creed,
His life was pure, and him they could commend,
Not as their guide, indeed, but as their friend:
Truth, justice, pity, and a love of peace,
Were his—but there must approbation cease;
He either did not, or he would not see,
That if he meant a favourite priest to be
He must not show, but learn of them, the way
To truth—he must not dictate, but obey:
They wish'd him not to bring them further light,
But to convince them that they now were right,

And to assert that justice will condemn
All who presumed to disagree with them:
In this he fail'd; and his the greater blame,
For he persisted, void of fear or shame.

Him Richard heard, and by his friendly aid
Were pleasant views observed and visits paid;
He to peculiar people found his way,
And had his question answer'd, "Who are they?"

Twice in the week came letters, and delight
Beam'd in the eye of Richard at the sight;
Letters of love, all full and running o'er,
The paper fill'd till it could hold no more;
Cross'd with discolour'd ink, the doublings full,
No fear that love should find abundance dull;
Love reads unsated all that love inspires,
When most indulged, indulgence still requires;
Looks what the corners, what the crossings tell,
And lifts each folding for a fond farewell.

George saw and smiled—"To lovers we allow
"All this o'erflowing, but a husband thou!
"A father too; can time create no change?
"Married, and still so foolish?—very strange!

" What of this wife or mistress is the art?"—
" The simple truth, my brother, to impart,
" Her heart, whene'er she writes, feels writing to a heart."

" Fortune, dear Richard, is thy friend—a wife
" Like thine must soften every care of life,
" And all its woes—I know a pair, whose lives
" Run in the common track of men and wives;
" And half their worth, at least, this pair would give
" Could they like thee and thy Matilda live.

" They were, as lovers, of the fondest kind,
" With no defects in manner or in mind;
" In habit, temper, prudence, they were those
" Whom, as examples, I could once propose;
" Now this, when married, you no longer trace,
" But discontent and sorrow in the place:
" Their pictures, taken as the pair I saw
" In a late contest, I have tried to draw;
" 'Tis but a sketch, and at my idle time
" I put my couple in the garb of rhyme:
" Thou art a critic of the milder sort,
" And thou wilt judge with favour my report.

" Let me premise, twelve months have flown away,
" Swiftly or sadly, since the happy day.

" Let us suppose the couple left to spend
" Some hours without engagement or a friend;
" And be it likewise on our mind impress'd,
" They pass for persons happy and at rest;
" Their love by Hymen crown'd, and all their prospects
bless'd.

" Love has slow death and sudden: wretches prove
" That fate severe—the sudden death of love;
" It is as if, on day serenely bright,
" Came with its horrors instantaneous night;
" Others there are with whom love dies away
" In gradual waste and unperceived decay;
" Such is that death of love that nature finds
" Most fitted for the use of common minds,
" The natural death; but doubtless there are some
" Who struggle hard when they perceive it come;
" Loth to be loved no longer, loth to prove
" To the once dear that they no longer love;
" And some with not successless arts will strive
" To keep the weak'ning, fluttering flame alive.

" But see my verse; in this I try to paint
" The passion failing, fading to complaint,
" The gathering grief for joys remember'd yet,
" The vain remonstrance, and the weak regret:
" First speaks the wife in sorrow, she is grieved
" T' admit the truth, and would be still deceived."

HENRY AND EMMA.

E. Well, my good sir, I shall contend no more;
But, O! the vows you made, the oaths you swore——

H. To love you always:—I confess it true;
And do I not? If not, what can I do?
Moreover think what you yourself profess'd,
And then the subject may for ever rest.

E. Yes, sir, obedience I profess'd; I know
My debt, and wish to pay you all I owe,
Pay without murmur; but that vow was made
To you, who said it never should be paid;—
Now truly tell me why you took such care
To make me err? I ask'd you not to swear,

But rather hoped you would my mind direct,
And say, when married, what you would expect.

You may remember—it is not so long
Since you affirm'd that I could not be wrong;
I told you then—you recollect, I told
The very truth—that humour would not hold;
Not that I thought, or ever could suppose,
The mighty raptures were so soon to close—
Poetic flights of love all sunk in sullen prose.

Do you remember how you used to hang
Upon my looks? your transports when I sang?
I play'd—you melted into tears; I moved—
Voice, words, and motion, how you all approved;
A time when Emma reign'd, a time when Henry loved:
You recollect?

H. Yes, surely; and then why
The needless truths? do I the facts deny?
For this remonstrance I can see no need,
Or this impatience—if you do, proceed.

E. O! that is now so cool, and with a smile
That sharpens insult—I detest the style;

And, now I talk of styles, with what delight
You read my lines—I then, it seems, could write:
In short, when I was present you could see
But one dear object, and you lived for me;
And now, sir, what your pleasure? Let me dress,
Sing, speak, or write, and you your sense express
Of my poor taste—my words are not correct;
In all I do is failing or defect—
Some error you will seek, some blunder will detect;
And what can such dissatisfaction prove?
I tell you, Henry, you have ceased to love.

H. I own it not; but if a truth it be,
It is the fault of nature, not of me.
Remember you, my love, the fairy tale,
Where the young pairs were spell-bound in the vale?
When all around them gay or glorious seem'd,
And of bright views and ceaseless joys they dream'd;
Young love and infant life no more could give—
They said but half, when they exclaim'd, "We live!"
All was so light, so lovely, so serene,
And not a trouble to be heard or seen;
Till, melting into truth, the vision fled,
And there came miry roads and thorny ways instead.

Such was our fate, my charmer! we were found
A wandering pair, by roguish Cupid bound;
All that I saw was gifted to inspire
Grand views of bliss, and wake intense desire
Of joys that never pall, of flights that never tire;
There was that purple light of love, that bloom,
That ardent passions in their growth assume,
That pure enjoyment of the soul—O! weak
Are words such loves and glowing thoughts to speak!
I sought to praise thee, and I felt disdain
Of my own effort; all attempts were vain.

Nor they alone were charming; by that light
All loved of thee grew lovely in my sight;
Sweet influence not its own in every place
Was found, and there was found in all things grace;
Thy shrubs and plants were seen new bloom to bear,
Not the Arabian sweets so fragrant were,
Nor Eden's self, if aught with Eden might compare.

You went the church-way walk, you reach'd the farm,
And gave the grass and babbling springs a charm;
Crop, whom you rode,—sad rider though you be,—
Thenceforth was more than Pegasus to me:

Have I not woo'd your snarling cur to bend
To me the paw and greeting of a friend?
And all his surly ugliness forgave,
Because, like me, he was my Emma's slave?
Think you, thus charm'd, I would the spell revoke?
Alas! my love, we married, and it broke!

Yet no deceit or falsehood stain'd my breast,
What I asserted might a saint attest;
Fair, dear, and good thou wert, nay, fairest, dearest, best:
Nor shame, nor guilt, nor falsehood I avow,
But 'tis by heaven's own light I see thee now;
And if that light will all those glories chase,
'Tis not my wish that will the good replace.

E. O! sir, this boyish tale is mighty well,
But 'twas your falsehood that destroy'd the spell:
Speak not of nature, 'tis an evil mind
That makes you to accustom'd beauties blind;
You seek the faults yourself, and then complain you find.

H. I sought them not; but, madam, 'tis in vain
The course of love and nature to restrain;

Lo! when the buds expand the leaves are green,
Then the first opening of the flower is seen;
Then comes the honied breath and rosy smile,
That with their sweets the willing sense beguile;
But, as we look, and love, and taste, and praise,
And the fruit grows, the charming flower decays;
Till all is gather'd, and the wintry blast
Moans o'er the place of love and pleasure past.

So 'tis with beauty,—such the opening grace
And dawn of glory in the youthful face;
Then are the charms unfolded to the sight,
Then all is loveliness and all delight;
The nuptial tie succeeds, the genial hour,
And, lo! the falling off of beauty's flower;
So, through all nature is the progress made,—
The bud, the bloom, the fruit,—and then we fade.

Then sigh no more,—we might as well retain
The year's gay prime as bid that love remain,
That fond, delusive, happy, transient spell,
That hides us from a world wherein we dwell,
And forms and fits us for that fairy ground,
Where charming dreams and gay conceits abound;

Till comes at length th' awakening strife and care,
That we, as tried and toiling men, must share.

E. O! sir, I must not think that heaven approves
Ungrateful man or unrequited loves;
Nor that we less are fitted for our parts
By having tender souls and feeling hearts.

H. Come, my dear friend, and let us not refuse
The good we have, by grief for that we lose;
But let us both the very truth confess;
This must relieve the ill, and may redress.

E. O! much I fear! I practised no deceit,
Such as I am I saw you at my feet;
If for a goddess you a girl would take,
'Tis you yourself the disappointment make.

H. And I alone?—O! Emma, when I pray'd
For grace from thee, transported and afraid,
Now raised to rapture, now to terror doom'd,
Was not the goddess by the girl assumed?
Did not my Emma use her skill to hide—
Let us be frank—her weakness and her pride?

Did she not all her sex's arts pursue,
To bring the angel forward to my view?
Was not the rising anger oft suppress'd?
Was not the waking passion hush'd to rest?
And when so mildly sweet you look'd and spoke,
Did not the woman deign to wear a cloak?
A cloak she wore, or, though not clear my sight,
I might have seen her—Think you not I might?

E. O! this is glorious!—while your passion lives,
To the loved maid a robe of grace it gives;
And then, unjust! beholds her with surprise,
Unrobed, ungracious, when the passion dies.

H. For this, my Emma, I to Heaven appeal,
I felt entirely what I seem'd to feel;
Thou wert all precious in my sight, to me
The being angels are supposed to be;
And am I now of my deception told,
Because I 'm doom'd a woman to behold?

E. Sir! in few words I would a question ask—
Mean these reproaches that I wore a mask?
Mean you that I by art or caution tried
To show a virtue, or a fault to hide?

H. I will obey you—When you seem'd to feel
Those books we read, and praised them with such zeal,
Approving all that certain friends approved,
Was it the pages, or the praise you loved?
Nay, do not frown—I much rejoiced to find
Such early judgment in such gentle mind;
But, since we married, have you deign'd to look
On the grave subjects of one favourite book?
Or have the once-applauded pages power
T' engage their warm approver for an hour?

Nay, hear me further—When we view'd that dell,
Where lie those ruins—you must know it well—
When that worn pediment your walk delay'd,
And the stream gushing through the arch decay'd;
When at the venerable pile you stood,
Till the does ventured on our solitude,
We were so still! before the growing day
Call'd us reluctant from our seat away—
Tell me, was all the feeling you express'd
The genuine feeling of my Emma's breast?
Or was it borrow'd, that her faithful slave
The higher notion of her taste might have?
So may I judge, for of that lovely scene
The married Emma has no witness been;

No more beheld that water, falling, flow
Through the green fern that there delights to grow.

Once more permit me——Well, I know, you feel
For suffering men, and would their sufferings heal,
But when at certain huts you chose to call,
At certain seasons, was compassion all?
I there beheld thee, to the wretched dear
As angels to expiring saints appear
When whispering hope—I saw an infant press'd
And hush'd to slumber on my Emma's breast!
Hush'd be each rude suggestion!—Well I know,
With a free hand your bounty you bestow;
And to these objects frequent comforts send,
But still they see not now their pitying friend.

A merchant, Emma, when his wealth he states,
Though rich, is faulty if he over-rates
His real store; and, gaining greater trust
For the deception, should we deem him just?

If in your singleness of heart you hide
No flaw or frailty, when your truth is tried,
And time has drawn aside the veil of love,
We may be sorry, but we must approve;

The fancied charms no more our praise compel,
But doubly shines the worth that stands so well.

E. O! precious are you all, and prizes too,
Or could we take such guilty pains for you?
Believe it not—As long as passion lasts,
A charm about the chosen maid it casts;
And the poor girl has little more to do
Than just to keep in sight as you pursue:
Chance to a ruin leads her; you behold,
And straight the angel of her taste is told;
Chance to a cottage leads you, and you trace
A virtuous pity in the angel's face;
She reads a work you chance to recommend,
And likes it well—at least, she likes the friend;
But when it chances this no more is done,
She has not left one virtue—No! not one!

But be it said, good sir, we use such art,
Is it not done to hold a fickle heart,
And fix a roving eye?—Is that design
Shameful or wicked that would keep you mine?
If I confess the art, I would proceed
To say of such that every maid has need.

Then when you flatter—in your language—praise,
In our own view you must our value raise;
And must we not, to this mistaken man,
Appear as like his picture as we can?
If you will call—nay, treat us as divine,
Must we not something to your thoughts incline?
If men of sense will worship whom they love,
Think you the idol will the error prove?
What! show him all her glory is pretence,
And make an idiot of this man of sense?

Then, too, suppose we should his praise refuse,
And clear his mind, we may our lover lose;
In fact, you make us more than nature makes,
And we, no doubt, consent to your mistakes;
You will, we know, until the frenzy cools,
Enjoy the transient paradise of fools;
But fancy fled, you quit the blissful state,
And truth for ever bars the golden gate.

H. True! but how ill each other to upbraid,
'Tis not our fault that we no longer staid;
No sudden fate our lingering love suppress,
It died an easy death, and calmly sank to rest:

To either sex is the delusion lent,
And when it fails us, we should rest content,
'Tis cruel to reproach, when bootless to repent.

E. Then wise the lovers who consent to wait,
And always lingering, never try the state;
But hurried on, by what they call their pain
And I their bliss, no longer they refrain;
To ease that pain, to lose that bliss, they run
To the church magi, and the thing is done;
A spell is utter'd, and a ring applied,
And forth they walk a bridegroom and a bride,
To find this counter-charm, this marriage rite,
Has put their pleasant fallacies to flight!
But tell me, Henry, should we truly strive,
May we not bid the happy dream revive?

H. Alas! they say when weakness or when vice
Expels a foolish pair from Paradise,
The guardian power to prayer has no regard,
The knowledge once obtain'd, the gate is barr'd;
Or could we enter we should still repine,
Unless we could the knowledge too resign.

Yet let us calmly view our present fate,
And make a humbler Eden of our state;
With this advantage, that what now we gain,
Experience gives, and prudence will retain.

E. Ah! much I doubt—when you in fury broke
That lovely vase by one impassion'd stroke,
And thousand china-fragments met my sight,
Till rising anger put my grief to flight;
As well might you the beauteous jar repiece,
As joy renew and bid vexation cease.

H. Why then 'tis wisdom, Emma, not to keep
These griefs in memory; they had better sleep.

There was a time when this heaven-guarded isle,
Whose valleys flourish—nay, whose mountains smile,
Was steril, wild, deform'd, and beings rude
Creatures scarce wilder than themselves pursued;
The sea was heard around a waste to howl,
The night-wolf answer'd to the whooting owl,
And all was wretched—Yet who now surveys
The land, withholds his wonder and his praise?

Come, let us try and make our moral view
Improve like this—this have we power to do.

E. O! I'll be all forgetful, deaf and dumb,
And all you wish, to have these changes come.

H. And come they may, if not as heretofore,
We cannot all the lovely vase restore;
What we beheld in Love's perspective glass
Has pass'd away—one sigh! and let it pass—
It was a blissful vision, and it fled,
And we must get some actual good instead:
Of good and evil that we daily find,
That we must hoard, *this* banish from the mind;
The food of Love, that food on which he thrives,
To find must be the business of our lives;
And when we know what Love delights to see,
We must his guardians and providers be.

As careful peasants, with incessant toil,
Bring earth to vines in bare and rocky soil,
And, as they raise with care each scanty heap,
Think of the purple clusters they shall reap;

So those accretions to the mind we 'll bring,
Whence fond regard and just esteem will spring;
Then, though we backward look with some regret
On those first joys, we shall be happy yet.

Each on the other must in all depend,
The kind adviser, the unfailing friend;
Through the rough world we must each other aid,
Leading and led, obeying and obey'd;
Favour'd and favouring, eager to believe
What should be truth—unwilling to perceive
What might offend—determined to remove
What has offended; wisely to improve
What pleases yet, and guard returning love.

Nor doubt, my Emma, but in many an hour
Fancy, who sleeps, shall wake with all her power;
And we shall pass—though not perhaps remain—
To fairy-land, and feel its charm again.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XV.

GRETNA GREEN.

Richard meets an Acquaintance of his Youth—The Kind of Meeting—His School—The Doctor Sidmere and his Family—Belwood, a Pupil—The Doctor's Opinion of him—The Opinion of his Wife—and of his Daughter—Consultation—The Lovers—Flight to Gretna Green—Return no more—The Doctor and his Lady—Belwood and his Wife—The Doctor reflects—Goes to his Son-in-law—His Reception and Return.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XV.

GRETNA GREEN.

" I MET," said Richard, when return'd to dine,
" In my excursion, with a friend of mine;
" Friend! I mistake,—but yet I knew him well,
" Ours was the village where he came to dwell;
" He was an orphan born to wealth, and then
" Placed in the guardian-care of cautious men;
" When our good parent, who was kindness all,
" Fed and caress'd him when he chose to call;
" And this he loved, for he was always one
" For whom some pleasant service must be done,
" Or he was sullen—He would come and play
" At his own time, and at his pleasure stay;
" But our kind parent soothed him as a boy
" Without a friend; she loved he should enjoy
" A day of ease, and strove to give his mind employ:

" She had but seldom the desired success,
" And therefore parting troubled her the less;
" Two years he there remain'd, then went his way,
" I think to school, and him I met to-day.

" I heard his name, or he had past unknown,
" And, without scruple, I divulged my own;
" His words were civil, but not much express'd,
" ' Yes! he had heard I was my brother's guest;'
" Then would explain, what was not plain to me,
" Why he could not a social neighbour be.
" He envied you, he said, your quiet life,
" And me a loving and contented wife;
" You, as unfetter'd by domestic bond,
" Me, as a husband and a father fond:
" I was about to speak, when to the right
" The road then turn'd, and lo! his house in sight.

" ' Adieu!' he said, nor gave a word or sign
" Of invitation—' Yonder house is mine;
" ' Your brother's I prefer, if I might choose—
" ' But, my dear sir, you have no time to lose.'

" Say, is he poor? or has he fits of spleen?
" Or is he melancholy, moped, or mean?

" So cold, so distant——I bestow'd some pains
" Upon the fever in my Irish veins."

" Well, Richard, let your native wrath be tamed,
" The man has half the evils you have named;
" He is not poor, indeed, nor is he free
" From all the gloom and care of poverty."

" But is he married?"—" Hush! the bell, my friend;
" That business done, we will to this attend;
" And, o'er our wine engaged, and at our ease,
" We may discourse of Belwood's miseries;
" Not that his sufferings please me—No, indeed;
" But I from such am happy to be freed."

Their speech, of course, to this misfortune led,
A weak young man improvidently wed.

" Weak," answer'd Richard; " but we do him wrong
" To say that his affection was not strong."

" That we may doubt," said George; " in men so weak
" You may in vain the strong affections seek;
" They have strong appetites; a fool will eat
" As long as food is to his palate sweet;

" His rule is not what sober nature needs,
" But what the palate covets as he feeds;
" He has the passions, anger, envy, fear,
" As storm is angry, and as frost severe;
" Uncheck'd, he still retains what nature gave,
" And has what creatures of the forest have.

" Weak boys, indulged by parents just as weak,
" Will with much force of their affection speak;
" But let mamma th' accustom'd sweets withhold,
" And the fond boys grow insolent and cold.

" Weak men profess to love, and while untried
" May woo with warmth, and grieve to be denied;
" But this is selfish ardour,—all the zeal
" Of their pursuit is from the wish they feel
" For self indulgence—When do they deny
" Themselves? and when the favourite object fly?
" Or, for that object's sake, with her requests comply?
" Their sickly love is fed with hopes of joy,
" Repulses damp it, and delays destroy;
" Love, that to virtuous acts will some excite,
" In others but provokes an appetite;
" In better minds, when love possession takes
" And meets with peril, he the reason shakes;

" But these weak natures, when they love profess,
" Never regard their small concerns the less.

" That true and genuine love has Quixote-flights
" May be allow'd—in vision it delights;
" But in its loftiest flight, its wildest dream,
" Has something in it that commands esteem
" But this poor love to no such region soars,
" But, Sancho-like, its selfish loss deplores;
" Of its own merit and its service speaks,
" And full reward for all its duty seeks."

—" When a rich boy, with all the pride of youth,
" Weds a poor beauty, will you doubt his truth?
" Such love is tried—it indiscreet may be,
" But must be generous"—
" That I do not see;
" Just at this time the balance of the mind
" Is this or that way by the weights inclined;
" In this scale beauty, wealth in that abides,
" In dubious balance, till the last subsides;
" Things are not poised in just the equal state,
" That the ass stands stock-still in the debate;
" Though when deciding he may slowly pass
" And long for both—the nature of the ass;

" 'Tis but an impulse that he must obey
" When he resigns one bundle of the hay."

Take your friend Belwood, whom his guardians sent
To Doctor Sidmere—full of dread he went;
Doctor they call'd him—he was not of us,
And where he was—we need not now discuss:
He kept a school, he had a daughter fair,
He said, as angels,—say, as women are.

Clara, this beauty, had a figure light,
Her face was handsome, and her eyes were bright;
Her voice was music, not by anger raised;
And sweet her dimple, either pleased or praised;
All round the village was her fame allow'd,
She was its pride, and not a little proud.

The ruling thought that sway'd her father's mind
Was this—I am for dignity design'd:
Riches he rather as a mean approved,
Yet sought them early, and in seeking loved;
For this he early made the marriage vow,
But fail'd to gain—I recollect not how;

For this his lady had his wrath incurr'd,
But that her feelings seldom could be stirr'd;
To his fair daughter, famed as well as fair,
He look'd, and found his consolation there.

The Doctor taught of youth some half a score,
Well-born and wealthy—He would take no more;
His wife, when peevish, told him, " Yes! and glad"—
It might be so—no more were to be had:
Belwood, it seems, for college was design'd,
But for more study he was not inclined:
He thought of labouring there with much dismay,
And motives mix'd here urged the long delay.

He now on manhood verged, at least began
To talk as he supposed became a man.

" Whether he chose the college or the school
" Was his own act, and that should no man rule;
" He had his reasons for the step he took,
" Did they suppose he stay'd to read his book?"

Hopeless, the Doctor said, " This boy is one
" With whom I fear there's nothing to be done."

His wife replied, who more had guess'd or knew,
" You only mean there's nothing he can do;
" Ev'n there you err, unless you mean indeed
" That the poor lad can neither think nor read."

—" What credit can I by such dunce obtain?"—
" Credit? I know not—you may something gain;
" 'Tis true he has no passion for his books,
" But none can closer study Clara's looks;
" And who controls him? now his father's gone,
" There's not a creature cares about the son.
" If he be brought to ask your daughter's hand,
" All that he has will be at her command;
" And who is she? and whom does she obey?
" Where is the wrong, and what the danger, pray?
" Becoming guide to one who guidance needs
" Is merit surely—If the thing succeeds,
" Cannot you always keep him at your side,
" And be his honour'd guardian and his guide?
" And cannot I my pretty Clara rule?
" Is not this better than a noisy school?"

The Doctor thought and mused, he felt and fear'd,
Wish'd it to be—then wish'd he had not heard;

But he was angry—that at least was right,
And gave him credit in his lady's sight;—
Then, milder grown, yet something still severe,
He said, " Consider, Madam, think and fear;"
But, ere they parted, softening to a smile,
" Farewell!" said he—" I 'll think myself awhile."

James and his Clara had, with many a pause
And many a doubt, infringed the Doctor's laws;
At first with terror, and with eyes turn'd round
On every side for fear they should be found:
In the long passage, and without the gate,
They met, and talk'd of love and his estate;
Sweet little notes, and full of hope, were laid
Where they were found by the attentive maid;
And these she answer'd kindly as she could,
But still ' I dare not' waited on ' I would;'
Her fears and wishes she in part confess'd,
Her thoughts and views she carefully suppress'd;
Her Jemmy said at length, " He did not heed
" His guardian's anger—What was he, indeed?
" A tradesman once, and had his fortune gain'd
" In that low way,—such anger he disdain'd—
" He loved her pretty looks, her eyes of blue,
" Her auburn-braid, and lips that shone like dew;

" And did she think her Jemmy stay'd at school
" To study Greek?—What, take him for a fool?
" Not he, by Jove! for what he had to seek
" He would in English ask her, not in Greek;
" Will you be mine? are all your scruples gone?
" Then let's be off—I've that will take us on."
'Twas true; the clerk of an attorney there
Had found a Jew,—the Jew supplied the heir.

Yet had he fears—" My guardians may condemn
" The choice I make—but what is that to them?
" The more they strive my pleasure to restrain
" The less they'll find they're likely to obtain;
" For when they work one to a proper cue,
" What they forbid one takes delight to do."

Clara exulted—now the day would come
Belwood must take her in her carriage home;
" Then I shall hear what Envy will remark
" When I shall sport the ponies in the park;
" When my friend Jane will meet me at the ball,
" And see me taken out the first of all;
" I see her looks when she beholds the men
" All crowd about me—she will simper then,

" And cry with her affected air and voice,
" ' O! my sweet Clara, how do I rejoice
" ' At your good fortune!'—' Thank you, dear,' say I;
" ' But some there are that could for envy die.' "

Mamma look'd on with thoughts to these allied,
She felt the pleasure of reflected pride;
She should respect in Clara's honour find—
But she to Clara's secret thoughts was blind;
O! when we thus design we do but spread
Nets for our feet, and to our toils are led:
Those whom we think we rule their views attain,
And we partake the guilt without the gain.

The Doctor long had thought, till he became
A victim both to avarice and shame;
From his importance, every eye was placed
On his designs—How dreadful if disgraced!

" O! that unknown to him the pair had flown
" To that same Green, the project all their own!
" And should they now be guilty of the act,
" Am not I free from knowledge of the fact?

" Will they not, if they will?"—'Tis thus we meet
The check of conscience, and our guide defeat.

This friend, this spy, this counsellor at rest,
More pleasing views were to the mind address'd.

The mischief done, he would be much displeased,
For weeks, nay, months, and slowly be appeased;—
Yet of this anger if they felt the dread,
Perhaps they dare not steal away to wed;
And if on hints of mercy they should go,
He stood committed—it must not be so.

In this dilemma either horn was hard,—
Best to seem careless, then, and off one's guard;
And, lest their terror should their flight prevent,
His wife might argue—fathers will relent
On such occasions—and that she should share
The guilt and censure was her proper care.

" Suppose them wed," said he, " and at my feet,
" I must exclaim that instant—Vile deceit!
" Then will my daughter, weeping, while they kneel,
" For its own Clara beg my heart may feel:

" At last, but slowly, I may all forgive,
" And their adviser and director live."

When wishes only weak the heart surprise,
Heaven, in its mercy, the fond prayer denies;
But when our wishes are both base and weak,
Heaven, in its justice, gives us what we seek.

All pass'd that was expected, all prepared
To share the comfort—What the comfort shared?

The married pair, on their return, agreed
That they from school were now completely freed;
Were man and wife, and to their mansion now
Should boldly drive, and their intents avow:
The acting guardian in the mansion reign'd,
And, thither driving, they their will explain'd:
The man awhile discoursed in language high,
The ward was sullen, and made brief reply;
Till, when he saw th' opposing strength decline,
He bravely utter'd—" Sir, the house is mine!"
And, like a lion, lash'd by self-rebuke,
His own defence he bravely undertook.

" Well! be it right or wrong, the thing is past;
" You cannot hinder what is tight and fast:
" The church has tied us; we are hither come
" To our own place, and you must make us room."

The man reflected—" You deserve, I know,
" Foolish young man! what fortune will bestow:
" No punishment from me your actions need,
" Whose pains will shortly to your fault succeed."

James was quite angry, wondering what was meant
By such expressions—Why should he repent?

New trial came—The wife conceived it right
To see her parents; " So," he said, " she might,
" If she had any fancy for a jail,
" But upon him no creature should prevail;
" No! he would never be again the fool
" To go and starve, or study at a school!"

" O! but to see her parents!"—" Well! the sight
" Might give her pleasure—very like it might,
" And she might go; but to his house restored,
" He would not now be catechised and bored."

It was her duty;—" Well!" said he again,
" There you may go—and there you may remain!"

Already this?—Even so: he heard it said
How rash and heedless was the part he play'd;
For love of money in his spirit dwelt,
And there repentance was intensely felt:
His guardian told him he had bought a toy
At tenfold price, and bargain'd like a boy:
Angry at truth, and wrought to fierce disdain,
He swore his loss should be no woman's gain;
His table she might share, his name she must,
But if aught more—she gets it upon trust.

For a few weeks his pride her face display'd—
He then began to thwart her, and upbraid;
He grew imperious, insolent, and loud—
His blinded weakness made his folly proud;
He would be master,—she had no pretence
To counsel him, as if he wanted sense;
He must inform her, she already cost
More than her worth, and more should not be lost;
But still concluding, " if your will be so
" That you must see the old ones, do it—go!"

Some weeks the Doctor waited, and the while
His lady preach'd in no consoling style:
At last she fear'd that rustic had convey'd
Their child to prison—yes, she was afraid,—
There to remain in that old hall alone
With the vile heads of stags, and floors of stone.

" Why did you, sir, who know such things so well,
" And teach us good, permit them to rebel?
" Had you o'erawed and check'd them when in sight,
" They would not then have ventured upon flight—
" Had you"——" Out, serpent! did not you begin?
" What! introduce, and then upbraid the sin?
" For sin it is, as I too well perceive:
" But leave me, woman, to reflection leave;
" Then to your closet fly, and on your knees
" Beg for forgiveness for such sins as these."

" A moody morning!" with a careless air
Replied the wife—" Why counsel me to prayer?
" I think the lord and teacher of a school
" Should pray himself, and keep his temper cool."

Calm grew the husband when the wife was gone—
" The game," said he, " is never lost till won:

" 'Tis true, the rebels fly their proper home,
" They come not nigh, because they fear to come;
" And for my purpose fear will doubtless prove
" Of more importance and effect than love;—
" Suppose me there—suppose the carriage stops,
" Down on her knees my trembling daughter drops;
" Slowly I raise her, in my arms to fall,
" And call for mercy as she used to call;
" And shall that boy, who dreaded to appear
" Before me, cast away at once his fear?
" 'Tis not in nature! He who once would cower
" Beneath my frown, and sob for half an hour;
" He who would kneel with motion prompt and quick
" If I but look'd—as dogs that do a trick;
" He still his knee-joints flexible must feel,
" And have a slavish promptitude to kneel;—
" Soon as he sees me he will drop his lip,
" And bend like one made ready for the whip:
" O! come, I trifle, let me haste away—
" What! throw it up, when I have cards to play?"

The Doctor went, a self-invited guest;
He met his pupil, and his frown repress'd,
For in those lowering looks he could discern
Resistance sullen and defiance stern;

Yet was it painful to put off his style
Of awful distance, and assume a smile:
So between these, the gracious and the grand,
Succeeded nothing that the Doctor plann'd.

The sullen youth, with some reviving dread,
Bow'd and then hang'd disconsolate his head;
And, muttering welcome in a muffled tone,
Stalk'd cross the park to meditate alone,
Saying, or rather seeming to have said,
" Go! seek your daughter, and be there obey'd."

He went—The daughter her distresses told,
But found her father to her interests cold;
He kindness and complacency advised;
She answer'd, " these were sure to be despised;
" That of the love her husband once possess'd
" Not the least spark was living in his breast;
" The boy repented, and grew savage soon;
" There never shone for her a honey-moon.
" Soon as he came, his cares all fix'd on one,
" Himself, and all his passion was a gun;
" And though he shot as he did all beside,
" It still remain'd his only joy and pride:

" He left her there,—she knew not where he went,—
" But knew full well he should the slight repent;
" She was not one his daily taunts to bear,
" He made the house a hell that he should share;
" For, till he gave her power herself to please,
" Never for him should be a moment's ease."

" He loves you, child!" the softening father cried:
—" He loves himself, and not a soul beside:
" Loves me!—why, yes, and so he did the pears
" You caught him stealing—would he had the fears!
" Would you could make him tremble for his life,
" And then to you return the stolen wife,
" Richly endow'd—but, O! the idiot knows
" The worth of every penny he bestows.

" Were he but fool alone, I'd find a way
" To govern him, at least to have my day;
" Or were he only brute, I'd watch the hour,
" And make the brute-affection yield me power;
" But silly both and savage—O! my heart!
" It is too great a trial!—we must part."

" Oblige the savage by some act!"—" The debt,
" You find, the fool will instantly forget;

" Oblige the fool with kindness or with praise,
" And you the passions of the savage raise."

" Time will do much."—" Can time my name restore?"
" Have patience, child."—" I am a child no more,
" Nor more dependent; but, at woman's age,
" I feel that wrongs provoke me and enrage:
" Sir, could you bring me comfort, I were cool;
" But keep your counsel for your boys at school."

The Doctor then departed—Why remain
To hear complaints, who could himself complain,
Who felt his actions wrong, and knew his efforts vain?

The sullen youth, contending with his fate,
Began the darling of his heart to hate;
Her pretty looks, her auburn braid, her face,
All now remain'd the proofs of his disgrace;
While, more than hateful in his vixen's eyes,
He saw her comforts from his griefs arise;
Who felt a joy she strove not to conceal,
When their expenses made her miser feel.

War was perpetual: on a first attack
She gain'd advantage, he would turn his back;

And when her small-shot whistled in his ears,
He felt a portion of his early fears;
But if he turn'd him in the battle's heat,
And fought in earnest, hers was then defeat;
His strength of oath and curse brought little harm,
But there was no resisting strength of arm.

Yet wearied both with war, and vex'd at heart,
The slaves of passion judged it best to part:
Long they debated, nor could fix a rate
For a man's peace with his contending mate;
But mutual hatred, scorn, and fear, assign'd
That price—that peace it was not theirs to find.

The watchful husband lived in constant hope
To hear the wife had ventured to elope;
But though not virtuous, nor in much discreet,
He found her coldness would such views defeat;
And thus, by self-reproof and avarice scourged,
He wore the galling chains his folly forged.

The wife her pleasures, few and humble, sought,
And with anticipated stipend bought;
Without a home, at fashion's call she fled
To an hired lodging and a widow'd bed;

Husband and parents banish'd from her mind,
She seeks for pleasures that she cannot find;
And grieves that so much treachery was employ'd
To gain a man who has her peace destroy'd.

Yet more the grieving father feels distress,
His error greater, and his motives less;
He finds too late, by stooping to deceit,
It is ourselves and not the world we cheat;
For, though we blind it, yet we can but feel
That we have something evil to conceal;
Nor can we by our utmost care be sure
That we can hide the sufferings we endure.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XVI.

LADY BARBARA; OR, THE GHOST.

Introductory Discourse—For what Purpose would a Ghost appear?—How the Purpose would be answered—The Fact admitted, would not Doubts return?—Family Stories of Apparitions—Story of Lady Barbara—Her Widowhood—Resides with a Priest—His Family—A favourite Boy—His Education—His Fondness for the Lady—It becomes Love—His Reflections—His Declaration—Her Reply—Her Relation—Why she must not marry a second Time—How warned—Tokens of the Appearance—The Lover argues with the Lady—His Success—The Consequences of it.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XVI.

LADY BARBARA; OR, THE GHOST.

The Brothers spoke of Ghosts,—a favourite theme
With those who love to reason or to dream;
And they, as greater men were wont to do,
Felt strong desire to think the stories true;
Stories of spirits freed, who came to prove
To spirits bound in flesh that yet they love,
To give them notice of the things below,
Which we must wonder how they came to know,
Or known, would think of coming to relate
To creatures who are tried by unknown fate.

" Warning," said Richard, " seems the only thing
" That would a spirit on an errand bring;
" To turn a guilty mind from wrong to right
" A ghost might come, at least I think it might."

" But," said the Brother, " if we here are tried,
" A spirit sent would put that law aside;
" It gives to some advantage others need,
" Or hurts the sinner should it not succeed:
" If from the dead, said Dives, one were sent
" To warn my brethren, sure they would repent;
" But Abraham answer'd, if they now reject
" The guides they have, no more would that effect;
" Their doubts too obstinate for grace would prove,
" For wonder hardens hearts it fails to move.

" Suppose a sinner in an hour of gloom,
" And let a ghost with all its horrors come;
" From lips unmoved let solemn accents flow,
" Solemn his gesture be, his motion slow;
" Let the waved hand and threatening look impart
" Truth to the mind and terror to the heart;
" And, when the form is fading to the view,
" Let the convicted man cry, ' this is true!'

" Alas! how soon would doubts again invade
" The willing mind, and sins again persuade!
" I saw it—What?—I was awake, but how?
" Not as I am, or I should see it now:

" It spoke, I think,—I thought, at least, it spoke,—
" And look'd alarming—yes, I felt the look.

" But then in sleep those horrid forms arise,
" That the soul sees,—and, we suppose, the eyes,—
" And the soul hears,—the senses then thrown by,
" She is herself the ear, herself the eye;
" A mistress so will free her servile race
" For their own tasks, and take herself the place:
" In sleep what forms will ductile fancy take,
" And what so common as to dream awake?
" On others thus do ghostly guests intrude?
" Or why am I by such advice pursued?
" One out of millions who exist, and why
" They know not—cannot know—and such am I;
" And shall two beings of two worlds, to meet,
" The laws of one, perhaps of both, defeat?
" It cannot be—But if some being lives
" Who such kind warning to a favourite gives,
" Let him these doubts from my dull spirit clear,
" And once again, expected guest! appear.

" And if a second time the power complied,
" Why is a third, and why a fourth denied?
" Why not a warning ghost for ever at our side?

" Ah, foolish being! thou hast truth enough,
" Augmented guilt would rise on greater proof;
" Blind and imperious passion disbelieves,
" Or madly scorns the warning it receives,
" Or looks for pardon ere the ill be done,
" Because 'tis vain to strive our fate to shun;
" In spite of ghosts, predestined woes would come,
" And warning add new terrors to our doom.

" Yet there are tales that would remove our doubt,
" The whisper'd tales that circulate about,
" That in some noble mansion take their rise,
" And told with secresy and awe, surprise:
" It seems not likely people should advance,
" For falsehood's sake, such train of circumstance;
" Then the ghosts bear them with a ghost-like grace,
" That suits the person, character, and place.

" But let us something of the kind recite:
" What think you, now, of Lady Barbara's spright?"

" I know not what to think; but I have heard
" A ghost, to warn her or advise, appear'd;
" And that she sought a friend before she died
" To whom she might the awful fact confide,

" Who seal'd and secret should the story keep
" Till Lady Barbara slept her final sleep,
" In that close bed, that never spirit shakes,
" Nor ghostly visitor the sleeper wakes."

" Yes, I can give that story, not so well
" As your old woman would the legend tell,
" But as the facts are stated; and now hear
" How ghosts advise, and widows persevere."

When her lord died, who had so kind a heart,
That any woman would have grieved to part,
It had such influence on his widow's mind,
That she the pleasures of the world resign'd,
Young as she was, and from the busy town
Came to the quiet of a village down;
Not as insensible to joys, but still
With a subdued but half-rebellious will;
For she had passions warm, and feeling strong,
With a right mind, that dreaded to be wrong;—
Yet she had wealth to tie her to the place
Where it procures delight and veils disgrace;

Yet she had beauty to engage the eye,
A widow still in her minority;
Yet she had merit worthy men to gain,
And yet her hand no merit could obtain;
For, though secluded, there were trials made,
When he who soften'd most could not persuade;
Awhile she hearken'd as her swain proposed,
And then his suit with strong refusal closed.

"Thanks, and farewell!—give credit to my word,
"That I shall die the widow of my lord;
"'Tis my own will, I now prefer the state,—
"If mine should change, it is the will of fate."

Such things were spoken, and the hearers cried,
"'Tis very strange,—perhaps she may be tried."

The lady past her time in taking air,
In working, reading, charities, and prayer;
In the last duties she received the aid
Of an old friend, a priest, with whom she pray'd;
And to his mansion with a purpose went,
That there should life be innocently spent;
Yet no cold vot'ress of the cloister she,
Warm her devotion, warm her charity;

The face the index of a feeling mind,
And her whole conduct rational and kind.

Though rich and noble, she was pleased to slide
Into the habits of her reverend guide,
And so attended to his girls and boys,
She seem'd a mother in her fears and joys;
On her they look'd with fondness, something check'd
By her appearance, that engaged respect;
For still she dress'd as one of higher race,
And her sweet smiles had dignity and grace.

George was her favourite, and it gave her joy
To indulge and to instruct the darling boy;
To watch, to soothe, to check the forward child,
Who was at once affectionate and wild;
Happy and grateful for her tender care,
And pleased her thoughts and company to share.

George was a boy with spirit strong and high,
With handsome face, and penetrating eye;
O'er his broad forehead hung his locks of brown,
That gave a spirit to his boyish frown;
" My little man," were words that she applied
To him, and he received with growing pride;

Her darling, even from his infant years,
Had something touching in his smiles and tears;
And in his boyish manners he began
To show the pride that was not made for man;
But it became the child, the mother cried,
And the kind lady said it was not pride.

George, to his cost, though sometimes to his praise,
Was quite a hero in these early days,
And would return from heroes just as stout,
Blood in his crimson cheek, and blood without.

"What! he submit to vulgar boys and low,
"He bear an insult, he forget a blow!
"They call'd him Parson—let his father bear
"His own reproach, it was his proper care;
"He was no parson, but he still would teach
"The boys their manners, and yet would not preach."

The father, thoughtful of the time foregone,
Was loth to damp the spirit of his son;
Rememb'ring he himself had early laurels won;
The mother, frighten'd, begg'd him to refrain,
And not his credit or his linen stain:

While the kind friend so gently blamed the deed,
He smiled in tears, and wish'd her to proceed;
For the boy pleased her, and that roguish eye
And daring look were cause of many a sigh,
When she had thought how much would such quick
temper try:
And oft she felt a kind of gathering gloom,
Sad, and prophetic of the ills to come.

Years fled unmark'd; the lady taught no more
Th' adopted tribe, as she was wont before;
But by her help the school the lasses sought,
And by the vicar's self the boy was taught;
Not unresisting when that cursed Greek
Ask'd so much time for words that none will speak.

" What can men worse for mortal brain contrive
" Than thus a hard dead language to revive!
" Heav'ns, if a language once be fairly dead,
" Let it be buried, not preserved and read,
" The bane of every boy to decent station bred.
" If any good these crabbed books contain,
" Translate them well, and let them then remain;

" To one huge vault convey the useless store,
" Then lose the key, and never find it more."

Something like this the lively boy express'd,
When Homer was his torment and his jest.

" George," said the father, " can at pleasure seize
" The point he wishes, and with too much ease;
" And hence, depending on his powers and vain,
" He wastes the time that he will sigh to gain."

The partial widow thought the wasted days
He would recover, urged by love and praise;
And thus absolved, the boy, with grateful mind,
Repaid a love so useful and so blind;
Her angry words he loved, although he fear'd,
And words not angry doubly kind appear'd.

George, then on manhood verging, felt the charms
Of war, and kindled at the world's alarms;
Yet war was then, though spreading wide and far,
A state of peace to what has since been war:
'Twas then some dubious claim at sea or land,
That placed a weapon in a warrior's hand;

But in these times the causes of our strife
Are hearth and altar, liberty and life.

George, when from college he return'd, and heard
His father's questions, cold and shy appear'd.

"Who had the honours?"—"Honour!" said the youth,
"Honour at college!—very good, in truth!"

"What hours to study did he give?"—He gave
Enough to feel they made him like a slave—
And the good vicar found if George should rise,
It would not be by college exercise.

"At least the time for your degree abide,
"And be ordain'd," the man of peace replied;
"Then you may come and aid me while I keep,
"And watch, and shear the hereditary sheep;
"Choose then your spouse."—That heard the youth, and sigh'd,
Nor to aught else attended or replied.

George had of late indulged unusual fears
And dangerous hopes: he wept unconscious tears;—

Whether for camp or college, well he knew
He must at present bid his friends adieu;
His father, mother, sisters,—could he part
With these, and feel no sorrow at his heart?
But from that lovely lady could he go?
That fonder, fairer, dearer mother?—No!
For while his father spoke, he fix'd his eyes
On that dear face, and felt a warmth arise,
A trembling flush of joy, that he could ill disguise—
Then ask'd himself from whence this growing bliss,
This new-found joy, and all that waits on this?
Why sinks that voice so sweetly in mine ear?
What makes it now a livelier joy to hear?
Why gives that touch—Still, still do I retain
The fierce delight that tingled through each vein—
Why at her presence with such quickness flows
The vital current?—Well a lover knows.

O! tell me not of years,—can she be old?
Those eyes, those lips, can man unmoved behold?
Has time that bosom chill'd? are cheeks so rosy cold?
No, she is young, or I her love t' engage
Will grow discreet, and that will seem like age:

But speak it not; Death's equalizing arm
Levels not surer than Love's stronger charm,
That bids all inequalities be gone,
That laughs at rank, that mocks comparison.

There is not young or old, if Love decrees,
He levels orders, he confounds degrees;
There is not fair, or dark, or short, or tall,
Or grave, or sprightly—Love reduces all;
From each abundant good a portion takes,
And for each want a compensation makes;
Then tell me not of years—Love, power divine,
Takes, as he wills, from hers, and gives to mine.

And she, in truth, was lovely—Time had strown
No snows on her, though he so long had flown;
The purest damask blossom'd in her cheek,
The eyes said all that eyes are wont to speak;
Her pleasing person she with care adorn'd,
Nor arts that stay the flying graces scorn'd;
Nor held it wrong these graces to renew,
Or give the fading rose its opening hue:
Yet few there were who needed less the art
To hide an error, or a grace impart.

George, yet a child, her faultless form admired,
And call'd his fondness love, as truth required;
But now, when conscious of the secret flame,
His bosom's pain, he dared not give the name:
In her the mother's milder passion grew,
Tender she was, but she was placid too;
From him the mild and filial love was gone,
And a strong passion came in triumph on.

" Will she," he cried, " this impious love allow?
" And, once my mother, be my mistress now?
" The parent-spouse? how far the thought from her,
" And how can I the daring wish aver?
" When first I speak it, how will those dear eyes
" Gleam with awaken'd horror and surprise;
" Will she not, angry and indignant, fly
" From my imploring call, and bid me die?
" Will she not shudder at the thought, and say,
" My son! and lift her eyes to heaven and pray?
" Alas! I fear—and yet my soul she won
" While she with fond endearments call'd me son!
" Then first I felt—yet knew that I was wrong—
" This hope, at once so guilty and so strong:
" She gave—I feel it now—a mother's kiss,
" And quickly fancy took a bolder bliss;

" But hid the burning blush, for fear that eye
" Should see the transport, and the bliss deny:
" O! when she knows the purpose I conceal,
" When my fond wishes to her bosom steal,
" How will the angel fear? How will the woman feel?

" And yet perhaps this instant, while I speak,
" She knows the pain I feel, the cure I seek;
" Better than I she may my feelings know,
" And nurse the passion that she dares not show:
" She reads the look,—and sure my eyes have shown
" To her the power and triumph of her own,—
" And in maternal love she veils the flame
" That she will heal with joy, yet hear with shame.

" Come, let me then—no more a son—reveal
" The daring hope, and for her favour kneel;
" Let me in ardent speech my meanings dress,
" And, while I mourn the fault, my love confess;
" And, once confess'd, no more that hope resign,
" For she or misery henceforth must be mine.

" O! what confusion shall I see advance
" On that dear face, responsive to my glance!

" Sure she can love!"

In fact, the youth was right;
She could, but love was dreadful in her sight;
Love like a spectre in her view appear'd,
The nearer he approach'd the more she fear'd.

But knew she, then, this dreaded love? She guess'd
That he had guilt—she knew he had not rest:
She saw a fear that she could ill define,
And nameless terrors in his looks combine;
It is a state that cannot long endure,
And yet both parties dreaded to be sure.

All views were past of priesthood and a gown,
George, fix'd on glory, now prepared for town;
But first this mighty hazard must be run,
And more than glory either lost or won:
Yet, what was glory? Could he win that heart
And gain that hand, what cause was there to part?
Her love afforded all that life affords—
Honour and fame were phantasies and words!

But he must see her—She alone was seen
In the still evening of a day serene:

In the deep shade beyond the garden walk
They met, and talking, ceased and fear'd to talk;
At length she spoke of parent's love,—and now
He hazards all—" No parent, lady, thou!
" None, none to me! but looks so fond and mild
" Would well become the parent of my child."

She gasp'd for breath—then sat as one resolved
On some high act, and then the means revolved.

" It cannot be, my George, my child, my son!
" The thought is misery!—Guilt and misery shun:
" Far from us both be such design, O, far!
" Let it not pain us at the awful bar,
" Where souls are tried, where known the mother's part
" That I sustain, and all of either heart.

" To wed with thee I must all shame efface,
" And part with female dignity and grace:
" Was I not told, by one who knew so well
" This rebel heart, that it must not rebel?
" Were I not warn'd, yet Reason's voice would cry,
" ' Retreat, resolve, and from the danger fly!'
" If Reason spoke not, yet would woman's pride
" A woman's will by better counsel guide;

" And should both Pride and Prudence plead in vain,
" There is a warning that must still remain,
" And, though the heart rebell'd, would ever cry
' Refrain.' "

He heard, he grieved—so check'd, the eager youth
Dared not again repeat th' offensive truth,
But stopp'd, and fix'd on that loved face an eye
Of pleading passion, trembling to reply;
And that reply was hurried, was express'd
With bursts of sorrow from a troubled breast;
He could not yet forbear the tender suit,
Yet dared not speak—his eloquence was mute.
But though awhile in silence he supprest
The pleading voice, and bade his passion rest,
Yet in each motion, in each varying look,
In every tender glance, that passion spoke.—
Words find, ere long, a passage; and once more
He warmly urges what he urged before;
He feels acutely, and he thinks, of course,
That what he feels his language will enforce;
Flame will to flame give birth, and fire to fire,
And so from heart to heart is caught desire;
He wonders how a gentle mind so long
Resists the pleading of a love so strong—

" And can that heart," he cries, " that face belie,
" And know no softness? Will it yet deny?"—

" I tell thee, George, as I have told before,
" I feel a mother's love, and feel no more;
" A child I bore thee in my arms, and how
" Could I—did prudence yield—receive thee now?"

At her remonstrance hope revived, for oft
He found her words severe, her accents soft;
In eyes that threaten'd tears of pity stood,
And truth she made as gracious as she could;—
But, when she found the dangerous youth would seek
His peace alone, and still his wishes speak,
Fearful she grew, that, opening thus his heart,
He might to hers a dangerous warmth impart:
All her objections slight to him appear'd,—
But one she had, and now it must be heard.

" Yes, it must be! and he shall understand
" What powers, that are not of the world, command;
" So shall he cease, and I in peace shall live—"
Sighing she spoke—" that widowhood can give!"
Then to her lover turn'd, and gravely said,
" Let due attention to my words be paid:

" Meet me to-morrow, and resolve t' obey ;"
Then named the hour and place, and went her way.

Before that hour, or moved by spirit vain
Of woman's wish to triumph and complain,
She had his parents summon'd, and had shown
Their son's strong wishes, nor conceal'd her own :
" And do you give," she said, " a parent's aid
" To make the youth of his strange love afraid ;
" And, be it sin or not, be all the shame display'd."

The good old pastor wonder'd, seem'd to grieve,
And look'd suspicious on this child of Eve :
He judged his boy, though wild, had never dared
To talk of love, had not rebuke been spared ;
But he replied, in mild and tender tone,
" It is not sin, and therefore shame has none."

The different ages of the pair he knew,
And quite as well their different fortunes too :
A meek, just man ; but difference in his sight
That made the match unequal made it right :
" His son, his friend united, and become
" Of his own hearth—the comforts of his home—

" Was it so wrong? Perhaps it was her pride
" That felt the distance, and the youth denied?"

The blushing widow heard, and she retired,
Musing on what her ancient friend desired;
She could not, therefore, to the youth complain,
That his good father wish'd him to refrain;
She could not add, your parents, George, obey,
They will your absence—no such will had they.

Now, in th' appointed minute met the pair,
Foredoom'd to meet: George made the lover's prayer,—
That was heard kindly; then the lady tried
For a calm spirit, felt it, and replied.

" George, that I love thee why should I suppress?
" For 'tis a love that virtue may profess—
" Parental,—frown not,—tender, fix'd, sincere;
" Thou art for dearer ties by much too dear,
" And nearer must not be, thou art so very near:
" Nay, do not reason, prudence, pride agree,
" Our very feelings, that it must not be?
" Nay, look not so, I shun the task no more,
" But will to thee thy better self restore.

" Then hear, and hope not; to the tale I tell
" Attend! obey me, and let all be well.
" Love is forbad to me, and thou wilt find
" All thy too ardent views must be resign'd;
" Then from thy bosom all such thoughts remove,
" And spare the curse of interdicted love.

" If doubts at first assail thee, wait awhile,
" Nor mock my sadness with satiric smile;
" For, if not much of other worlds we know,
" Nor how a spirit speaks in this below,
" Still there is speech and intercourse; and now
" The truth of what I tell I first avow,
" True will I be in all, and be attentive thou.

" I was a Ratcliffe, taught and train'd to live
" In all the pride that ancestry can give;
" My only brother, when our mother died,
" Fill'd the dear offices of friend and guide;
" My father early taught us all he dared,
" And for his bolder flights our minds prepared:
" He read the works of deists, every book
" From crabbed Hobbes to courtly Bolingbroke;
" And when we understood not, he would cry,
" Let the expressions in your memory lie,

" The light will soon break in, and you will find
" Rest for your spirits, and be strong of mind!

" Alas! however strong, however weak,
" The rest was something we had still to seek!

" He taught us duties of no arduous kind,
" The easy morals of the doubtful mind;
" He bade us all our childish fears control,
" And drive the nurse and grandam from the soul;
" Told us the word of God was all we saw,
" And that the law of nature was his law;
" This law of nature we might find abstruse,
" But gain sufficient for our common use.

" Thus, by persuasion, we our duties learn'd,
" And were but little in the cause concern'd.
" We lived in peace, in intellectual ease,
" And thought that virtue was the way to please,
" And pure morality the keeping free
" From all the stains of vulgar villany.

" But Richard, dear enthusiast! shunn'd reproach,
" He let no stain upon his name encroach;

" But fled the hated vice, was kind and just,
" That all must love him, and that all might trust.

" Free, sad discourse was ours; we often sigh'd
" To think we could not in some truths confide:
" Our father's final words gave no content,
" We found not what his self-reliance meant:
" To fix our faith some grave relations sought,
" Doctrines and creeds of various kind they brought,
" And we as children heard what they as doctors taught.

" Some to the priest referr'd us, in whose book
" No unbeliever could resisting look;
" Others to some great preacher's, who could tame
" The fiercest mind, and set the cold on flame;
" For him no rival in dispute was found
" Whom he could not confute or not confound.
" Some mystics told us of the sign and seal,
" And what the spirit would in time reveal,
" If we had grace to wait, if we had hearts to feel:
" Others, to reason trusting, said, believe
" As she directs, and what she proves receive;
" While many told us, it is all but guess,
" Stick to your church, and calmly acquiesce.

" Thus, doubting, wearied, hurried, and perplex'd,
" This world was lost in thinking of the next:
" When spoke my brother—' From my soul I hate
" ' This clash of thought, this ever doubting state;
" ' For ever seeking certainty, yet blind
" ' In our research, and puzzled when we find.

" ' Could not some spirit, in its kindness, steal
" ' Back to our world, and some dear truth reveal?
" ' Say there is danger,—if it could be done,
" ' Sure one would venture,—I would be the one;
" ' And when a spirit—much as spirits might—
" ' I would to thee communicate my light!'

" I sought my daring brother to oppose,
" But awful gladness in my bosom rose:
" I fear'd my wishes; but through all my frame
" A bold and elevating terror came:
" Yet with dissembling prudence I replied,
" ' Know we the laws that may be thus defied?
" ' Should the free spirit to th' embodied tell
" ' The precious secret, would it not rebel?'
" Yet while I spoke I felt a pleasing glow
" Suffuse my cheek at what I long'd to know;

" And I, like Eve transgressing, grew more bold,
" And wish'd to hear a spirit and behold.

" ' I have no friend,' said he, ' to not one man
" ' Can I appear; but, love! to thee I can:
" ' Who first shall die'——I wept, but—' I agree
" ' To all thou say'st, dear Richard! and would be
" ' The first to wing my way, and bring my news to thee.'

" Long we conversed, but not till we perceived
" A gathering gloom—Our freedom gain'd, we grieved;
" Above the vulgar, as we judged, in mind,
" Below in peace, more sad as more refined;
" 'Twas joy, 'twas sin—Offenders at the time,
" We felt the hurried pleasure of our crime
" With pain that crime creates, and this in both—
" Our mind united as the strongest oath.
" O, my dear George! in ceasing to obey,
" Misery and trouble meet us in our way!
" I felt as one intruding in a scene
" Where none should be, where none had ever been;
" Like our first parent, I was new to sin,
" But plainly felt its sufferings begin:

" In nightly dreams I walk'd on soil unsound,
" And in my day-dreams endless error found.

" With this dear brother I was doom'd to part,
" Who, with an husband, shared a troubled heart:
" My lord I honour'd; but I never proved
" The madd'ning joy, the boast of some who loved:
" It was a marriage that our friends profess'd
" Would be most happy, and I acquiesced;
" And we were happy, for our love was calm,
" Not life's delicious essence, but its balm.

" My brother left us,—dear, unhappy boy!
" He never seem'd to taste of earthly joy,
" Never to live on earth, but ever strove
" To gain some tidings of a world above.

" Parted from him, I found no more to please,
" Ease was my object, and I dwelt in ease;
" And thus in quiet, not perhaps content,
" A year in wedlock, lingering time! was spent.

" One night I slept not, but I courted sleep,
" And forced my thoughts on tracks they could not keep;

" Till nature, wearied in the strife, reposed,
" And deep forgetfulness my wanderings closed.

" My lord was absent—distant from the bed
" A pendent lamp its soften'd lustre shed;
" But there was light that chased away the gloom,
" And brought to view each object in the room:
" These I observed ere yet I sunk in sleep,
" That, if disturb'd not, had been long and deep.

" I was awaken'd by some being nigh,
" It seem'd some voice, and gave a timid cry,—
" When sounds, that I describe not, slowly broke
" On my attention——' Be composed, and look!'—
" I strove, and I succeeded; look'd with awe,
" But yet with firmness, and my brother saw.

" George, why that smile?—By all that God has done,
" By the great Spirit, by the blessed Son,
" By the one holy Three, by the thrice holy One,
" I saw my brother,—saw him by my bed,
" And every doubt in full conviction fled!—
" It was his own mild spirit—He awhile
" Waited my calmness with benignant smile;

" So softly shines the veiled sun, till past
" The cloud, and light upon the world is cast:
" That look composed and soften'd I survey'd,
" And met the glance fraternal less afraid;
" Though in those looks was something of command,
" And traits of what I fear'd to understand.

" Then spoke the spirit—George, I pray, attend—
" ' First let all doubts of thy religion end—
" ' The word reveal'd is true: inquire no more,
" ' Believe in meekness, and with thanks adore:
" ' Thy priest attend, but not in all rely,
" ' And to objectors seek for no reply:
" ' Truth, doubt, and error, will be mix'd below—
" ' Be thou content the greater truths to know,
" ' And in obedience rest thee——For thy life
" ' Thou needest counsel—now a happy wife,
" ' A widow soon! and then, my sister, then
" ' Think not of marriage, think no more of men;—
" ' Life will have comforts; thou wilt much enjoy
" ' Of moderate good, then do not this destroy;
" ' Fear much, and wed no more; by passion led,
" ' Shouldst thou again'—Art thou attending?—' wed,
" ' Care in thy ways will growl, and anguish haunt thy bed:

" ' A brother's warning on thy heart engrave:
" ' Thou art a mistress—then be not a slave!
" ' Shouldst thou again that hand in fondness give,
" ' What life of misery art thou doom'd to live!
" ' How wilt thou weep, lament, implore, complain!
" ' How wilt thou meet derision and disdain!
" ' And pray to heaven in doubt, and kneel to man in vain!
" ' Thou read'st of woes to tender bosoms sent—
" ' Thine shall with tenfold agony be rent;
" ' Increase of anguish shall new years bestow,
" ' Pain shall on thought and grief on reason grow,
" ' And this th' advice I give increase the ill I show.'

" ' A second marriage!—No!—by all that 's dear!'
" I cried aloud—The spirit bade me hear.

" ' There will be trial,—how I must not say,
" ' Perhaps I cannot—listen, and obey!—
" ' Free is thy will—th' event I cannot see,
" ' Distinctly cannot, but thy will is free:
" ' Come, weep not, sister—spirits can but guess,
" ' And not ordain—but do not wed distress;
" ' For who would rashly venture on a snare?'
" ' I swear!' I answer'd.—' No, thou must not swear,'

" He said, or I had sworn; but still the vow
" Was past, was in my mind, and there is now:
" Never! O, never!—Why that sullen air?
" Think'st thou—ungenerous!—I would wed despair?

" Was it not told me thus?—and then I cried,
" ' Art thou in bliss?'—but nothing he replied,
" Save of my fate, for that he came to show,
" Nor of aught else permitted me to know.

" ' Forewarn'd, forearm thee, and thy way pursue,
" ' Safe, if thou wilt, not flow'ry—now, adieu!'

" ' Nay, go not thus,' I cried, ' for this will seem
" ' The work of sleep, a mere impressive dream;
" ' Give me some token, that I may indeed
" ' From the suggestions of my doubts be freed!'

" ' Be this a token—ere the week be fled
" ' Shall tidings greet thee from the newly dead.'

" ' Nay, but,' I said, with courage not my own,
" ' O! be some signal of thy presence shown;

" ' Let not this visit with the rising day
" ' Pass, and be melted like a dream away.'

" ' O, woman! woman! ever anxious still
" ' To gain the knowledge, not to curb the will!
" ' Have I not promised?—Child of sin, attend—
" ' Make not a lying spirit of thy friend:
" ' Give me thy hand!'——I gave it, for my soul
" Was now grown ardent, and above control;
" Eager I stretch'd it forth, and felt the hold
" Of shadowy fingers, more than icy cold:
" A nameless pressure on my wrist was made,
" And instant vanish'd the beloved shade!
" Strange it will seem, but, ere the morning came,
" I slept, nor felt disorder in my frame:
" Then came a dream—I saw my father's shade,
" But not with awe like that my brother's made;
" And he began—' What! made a convert, child?
" ' Have they my favourite by their creed beguiled?
" ' Thy brother's weakness I could well foresee,
" ' But had, my girl, more confidence in thee:
" ' Art thou, indeed, before their ark to bow?
" ' I smiled before, but I am angry now:

" ' Thee will they bind by threats, and thou wilt shake
" ' At tales of terror that the miscreants make:
" ' Between the bigot and enthusiast led,
" ' Thou hast a world of miseries to dread:
" ' Think for thyself, nor let the knaves or fools
" ' Rob thee of reason, and prescribe thee rules.'

" Soon as I woke, and could my thoughts collect,
" What can I think, I cried, or what reject?
" Was it my brother? Aid me, power divine!
" Have I not seen him, left he not a sign?
" Did I not then the placid features trace
" That now remain—the air, the eye, the face?
" And then my father—but how different seem
" These visitations—this, indeed, a dream!

" Then for that token on my wrist—'tis here,
" And very slight to you it must appear;
" Here, I'll withdraw the bracelet—'tis a speck!
" No more! but 'tis upon my life a check."—

" O! lovely all, and like its sister arm!
" Call this a check, dear lady? 'tis a charm—
" A slight, an accidental mark—no more"——
" Slight as it is, it was not there before:

" Then was there weakness, and I bound it——Nay!
" This is infringement—take those lips away!

" On the fourth day came letters, and I cried,
" Richard is dead, and named the day he died:
" A proof of knowledge, true! but one, alas! of pride.
" The signs to me were brought, and not my lord,
" But I impatient waited not the word;
" And much he marvell'd, reading of the night
" In which th' immortal spirit took its flight.

" Yes! I beheld my brother at my bed,
" The hour he died! the instant he was dead—
" His presence now I see! now trace him as he fled.

" Ah! fly me, George, in very pity, fly;
" Thee I reject, but yield thee reasons why;
" Our fate forbids,—the counsel heaven has sent
" We must adopt, or grievously repent;
" And I adopt"——George humbly bow'd, and sigh'd,
But, lost in thought, he look'd not nor replied;
Yet feebly utter'd in his sad adieu,
" I must not doubt thy truth, but perish if thou 'rt true."

But when he thought alone, his terror gone
Of the strange story, better views came on.

" Nay, my enfeebled heart, be not dismay'd!
" A boy again, am I of ghosts afraid?
" Does she believe it? Say she does believe,
" Is she not born of error and of Eve?
" O! there is lively hope I may the cause retrieve."

" ' If you re-wed,' exclaim'd the Ghost—For what
" Puts he the case, if marry she will not?
" He knows her fate—but what am I about?
" Do I believe?—'tis certain I have doubt,
" And so has she,—what therefore will she do?
" She the predicted fortune will pursue,
" And by th' event will judge if her strange dream was true;
" The strong temptation to her thought applied
" Will gain new strength, and will not be denied;
" The very threat against the thing we love
" Will the vex'd spirit to resistance move;
" With vows to virtue weakness will begin,
" And fears of sinning let in thoughts of sin."

Strong in her sense of weakness, now withdrew
The cautious lady from the lover's view;

But she perceived the looks of all were changed,—
Her kind old friends grew peevish and estranged;
A fretful spirit reign'd, and discontent
From room to room in sullen silence went;
And the kind widow was distress'd at heart
To think that she no comfort could impart:
" But he will go," she said, " and he will strive
" In fields of glorious energy to drive
" Love from his bosom—Yes, I then may stay,
" And all will thank me on a future day."

So judged the lady, nor appear'd to grieve,
Till the young soldier came to take his leave;
But not of all assembled—No! he found
His gentle sisters all in sorrow drown'd;
With many a shaken hand, and many a kiss,
He cried, " Farewell! a solemn business this;
" Nay, Susan, Sophy!—heaven and earth, my dears!
" I am a soldier—What do I with tears?"

He sought his parents;—they together walk'd,
And of their son, his views and dangers, talk'd;
They knew not how to blame their friend, but still
They murmur'd, " She may save us if she will:

" Were not these visions working in her mind
" Strange things—'tis in her nature to be kind."

Their son appear'd—He sooth'd them, and was bless'd,
But still the fondness of his soul confess'd—
And where the lady?—To her room retired!
Now show, dear son, the courage she required.

George bow'd in silence, trying for assent
To his hard fate, and to his trial went:
Fond, but yet fix'd, he found her in her room;
Firm, and yet fearful, she beheld him come:
Nor sought he favour now—No! he would meet his doom.

" Farewell! and, Madam, I beseech you pray
" That this sad spirit soon may pass away;
" That sword or ball would to the dust restore
" This body, that the soul may grieve no more
" For love rejected——O! that I could quit
" The life I lothe, who am for nothing fit,
" No, not to die!"——" Unhappy, wilt thou make
" The house all wretched for thy passion's sake?
" And most its grieving object?"
" Grieving?—No!
" Or as a conqueror mourns a dying foe,

" That makes his triumph sure——Couldst thou deplore
" The evil done, the pain would be no more;
" But an accursed dream has steel'd thy breast,
" And all the woman in thy soul suppress'd."—

" O! it was vision, George; a vision true
" As ever seer or holy prophet knew."—

" Can spirits, lady, though they might alarm,
" Make an impression on that lovely arm?
" A little cold the cause, a little heat,
" Or vein minute, or artery's morbid beat,
" Even beauty these admit."—
" I did behold
" My brother's form."—
" Yes, so thy Fancy told,
" When in the morning she her work survey'd,
" And call'd the doubtful memory to her aid."—

" Nay, think! the night he died—the very night!"—
" —'Tis very true, and so perchance he might,
" But in thy mind—not, lady, in thy sight!
" Thou wert not well; forms delicately made
" These dreams and fancies easily invade;

" The mind and body feel the slow disease,
" And dreams are what the troubled fancy sees."—

" O! but how strange that all should be combined!"—
" True; but such combinations we may find;
" A dream's predicted number gain'd a prize,
" Yet dreams make no impression on the wise,
" Though some chance good, some lucky gain may rise."

" O! but those words, that voice so truly known!"——
" No doubt, dear lady, they were all thine own;
" Memory for thee thy brother's form portray'd;
" It was thy fear the awful warning made:
" Thy former doubts of a religious kind
" Account for all these wanderings of the mind."

" But then, how different when my father came,
" These could not in their nature be the same!"—

" Yes, all are dreams; but some as we awake
" Fly off at once, and no impression make;
" Others are felt, and ere they quit the brain
" Make such impression that they come again;

" As half familiar thoughts, and half unknown,
" And scarcely recollected as our own;
" For half a day abide some vulgar dreams,
" And give our grandams and our nurses themes;
" Others, more strong, abiding figures draw
" Upon the brain, and we assert 'I saw;'
" And then the fancy on the organs place
" A powerful likeness of a form and face.

" Yet more—in some strong passion's troubled reign,
" Or when the fever'd blood inflames the brain,
" At once the outward and the inward eye
" The real object and the fancied spy;
" The eye is open, and the sense is true,
" And therefore they the outward object view;
" But while the real sense is fix'd on these,
" The power within its own creation sees;
" And these, when mingled in the mind, create
" Those striking visions which our dreamers state;
" For knowing that is true that met the sight,
" They think the judgment of the fancy right;——
" Your frequent talk of dreams has made me turn
" My mind on them, and these the facts I learn.

" Or should you say, 'tis not in us to take
" Heed in both ways, to sleep and be awake,
" Perhaps the things by eye and mind survey'd
" Are in their quick alternate efforts made;
" For by this mixture of the truth, the dream
" Will in the morning fresh and vivid seem.

" Dreams are like portraits, and we find they please
" Because they are confess'd resemblances;
" But those strange night-mare visions we compare
" To waxen figures—they too real are,
" Too much a very truth, and are so just
" To life and death, they pain us or disgust.

" Hence from your mind these idle visions shake,
" And O! my love, to happiness awake!"—

" It *was* a warning, tempter! from the dead;
" And, wedding thee, I should to misery wed!"—

" False and injurious! What! unjust to thee?
" O! hear the vows of Love—it cannot be;
" What, I forbear to bless thee—I forego
" That first great blessing of existence? No!

" Did every ghost that terror saw arise
" With such prediction, I should say it lies;
" But none there are—a mighty gulf between
" Hides the ideal world from objects seen;
" We know not where unbodied spirits dwell,
" But this we know, they are invisible;—
" Yet I have one that fain would dwell with thee,
" And always with thy purer spirit be."—

" O! leave me, George!"
" To take the field, and die,
" So leave thee, lady? Yes, I will comply;
" Thou art too far above me—Ghosts withstand
" My hopes in vain, but riches guard thy hand,
" For I am poor—affection and an heart
" To thee devoted, I but these impart:
" Then bid me go, I will thy words obey,
" But let not visions drive thy friend away."—

" Hear me, Oh! hear me—Shall I wed my son?"—
" I am in fondness and obedience one;
" And I will reverence, honour, love, adore,
" Be all that fondest sons can be—and more;

" And shall thy son, if such he be, proceed
" To fierce encounters, and in battle bleed?
" No; thou canst weep!"—
" O! leave me, I entreat;
" Leave me a moment—we shall quickly meet."—

" No! here I kneel, a beggar at thy feet."—
He said, and knelt—with accents, softer still,
He woo'd the weakness of a failing will,
And erring judgment—took her hand, and cried,
" Withdraw it not!—O! let it thus abide,
" Pledge of thy love—upon thy act depend
" My joy, my hope,—thus they begin or end!
" Withdraw it not."——He saw her looks express'd
Favour and grace—the hand was firmer press'd;—
Signs of opposing fear no more were shown,
And, as he press'd, he felt it was his own.

Soon through the house was known the glad assent,
The night so dreaded was in comfort spent;
War was no more, the destined knot was tied,
And the fond widow made a fearful bride.

Let mortal frailty judge how mortals frail
Thus in their strongest resolutions fail,
And though we blame, our pity will prevail.

Yet, with that Ghost—for so she thought—in view!
When she believed that all he told was true;
When every threat was to her mind recall'd,
Till it became affrighten'd and appall'd;
When Reason pleaded, think! forbear! refrain!
And when, though trifling, stood that mystic stain,
Predictions, warnings, threats, were present all in vain.

Th' exulting youth a mighty conqueror rose,
And who hereafter shall his will oppose?

Such is our tale; but we must yet attend
Our weak, kind widow to her journey's end;
Upon her death-bed laid, confessing to a friend
Her full belief, for to the hour she died
This she profess'd——" The truth I must not hide,
" It was my brother's form, and in the night he died:
" In sorrow and in shame has pass'd my time,
" All I have suffer'd follow from my crime;

" I sinn'd with warning—when I gave my hand
" A power within said, urgently,—Withstand!
" And I resisted—O! my God, what shame,
" What years of torment from that frailty came;
" That husband-son!—I will my fault review;
" What did he not that men or monsters do?
" His day of love, a brief autumnal day,
" Ev'n in its dawning hasten'd to decay;
" Doom'd from our odious union to behold
" How cold he grew, and then how worse than cold;
" Eager he sought me, eagerly to shun,
" Kneeling he woo'd me, but he scorn'd me, won;
" The tears he caused served only to provoke
" His wicked insult o'er the heart he broke;
" My fond compliance served him for a jest,
" And sharpen'd scorn——' I ought to be distress'd;
" ' Why did I not with my chaste ghost comply!'
" And with upbraiding scorn he told me why;—
" O! there was grossness in his soul; his mind
" Could not be raised, nor soften'd, nor refined.

" Twice he departed in his rage, and went
" I know not where, nor how his days were spent;

" Twice he return'd a suppliant wretch, and craved,
" Mean as profuse, the trifle I had saved.

" I have had wounds, and some that never heal,
" What bodies suffer, and what spirits feel;
" But he is gone who gave them, he is fled
" To his account! and my revenge is dead—
" Yet is it duty, though with shame, to give
" My sex a lesson—let my story live;
" For if no ghost the promised visit paid,
" Still was a deep and strong impression made,
" That wisdom had approved, and prudence had obey'd;
" But from another world that warning came,
" And O! in this be ended all my shame!

" Like the first being of my sex I fell,
" Tempted, and with the tempter doom'd to dwell—
" He was the master-fiend, and where he reign'd was hell."

This was her last, for she described no more
The rankling feelings of a mind so sore,

But died in peace.—One moral let us draw—
Be it a ghost or not the lady saw—

If our discretion tells us how to live,
We need no ghost a helping hand to give;
But if discretion cannot us restrain,
It then appears a ghost would come in vain.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XVII.

THE WIDOW.

The Morning Walk—Village Scenery—The Widow's Dwelling—Her Story related—The first Husband—His Indulgence — Its Consequence — Dies—The second—His Authority—Its Effects—His Death—A third Husband—Determinately indulgent — He dies also — The Widow's Retirement.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XVII.

THE WIDOW.

Richard one morning—it was custom now—
Walk'd and conversed with labourers at the plough,
With thrashers hastening to their daily task,
With woodmen resting o'er the enlivening flask,
And with the shepherd, watchful of his fold
Beneath the hill, and pacing in the cold:
Further afield he sometimes would proceed,
And take a path wherever it might lead.

It led him far about to Wickham Green,
Where stood the mansion of the village queen;
Her garden yet its wintry blossoms bore,
And roses graced the windows and the door—

That lasting kind, that through the varying year
Or in the bud or in the bloom appear;
All flowers that now the gloomy days adorn
Rose on the view, and smiled upon that morn:
Richard a damsel at the window spied,
Who kindly drew a useless veil aside,
And show'd a lady who was sitting by,
So pensive, that he almost heard her sigh:
Full many years she could, no question, tell,
But in her mourning look'd extremely well.

" In truth," said Richard, when he told at night
His tale to George, " it was a pleasant sight;
" She look'd like one who could, in tender tone,
" Say, ' Will you let a lady sigh alone?
" ' See! Time has touch'd me gently in his race,
" ' And left no odious furrows in my face;
" ' See, too, this house and garden, neat and trim,
" ' Kept for its master——Will you stand for him?'

" Say this is vain and foolish if you please,
" But I believe her thoughts resembled these:
" ' Come!' said her looks, ' and we will kindly take
" ' The visit kindness prompted you to make.'

" And I was sorry that so much good play
" Of eye and attitude were thrown away
" On one who has his lot, on one who had his day."

" Your pity, brother," George, with smile, replied,
" You may dismiss, and with it send your pride:
" No need of pity, when the gentle dame
" Has thrice resign'd and reassumed her name;
" And be not proud—for, though it might be thine,
" She would that hand to humbler men resign.

" Young she is not,—it would be passing strange
" If a young beauty thrice her name should change:
" Yes! she has years beyond your reckoning seen—
" Smiles and a window years and wrinkles screen;
" But she, in fact, has that which may command
" The warm admirer and the willing hand:
" What is her fortune we are left to guess,
" But good the sign—she does not much profess;
" Poor she is not,—and there is that in her
" That easy men to strength of mind prefer;
" She may be made, with little care and skill,
" Yielding her own, t' adopt an husband's will:
" Women there are, who of a man will take
" The helm and steer—will no resistance make;

" Who, if neglected, will the power assume,
" And then what wonder if the shipwreck come?

" Queens they will be if man allow the means,
" And give the power to these domestic queens;
" Whom, if he rightly trains, he may create
" And make obedient members of his state."

Harriet at school was very much the same
As other misses, and so home she came,
Like other ladies, there to live and learn,
To wait her season, and to take her turn.

Their husbands maids as priests their livings gain,
The best, they find, are hardest to obtain;
On those that offer both awhile debate—
" I need not take it, it is not so late;
" Better will come if we will longer stay,
" And strive to put ourselves in fortune's way:"
And thus they wait, till many years are past,
For what comes slowly—*but it comes at last.*

Harriet was wedded,—but it must be said,
The vow'd obedience was not duly paid:

Hers was an easy man,—it gave him pain
To hear a lady murmur and complain:
He was a merchant, whom his father made
Rich in the gains of a successful trade:
A lot more pleasant, or a view more fair,
Has seldom fallen to a youthful pair.

But what is faultless in a world like this?
In every station something seems amiss:
The lady, married, found the house too small—
"Two shabby parlours, and that ugly hall!
"Had we a cottage somewhere, and could meet
"One's friends and favourites in one's snug retreat;
"Or only join a single room to these,
"It would be living something at our ease,
"And have one's self, at home, the comfort that one sees."

Such powers of reason, and of mind such strength,
Fought with man's fear, and they prevail'd at length:
The room was built,—and Harriet did not know
A prettier dwelling, either high or low;
But Harriet loved such conquests, loved to plead
With her reluctant man, and to succeed;

It was such pleasure to prevail o'er one
Who would oppose the thing that still was done,
Who never gain'd the race, but yet would groan and run.

But there were times when love and pity gave
Whatever thoughtless vanity could crave:
She now the carriage chose with freshest name,
And was in quite a fever till it came;
But can a carriage be alone enjoy'd?
The pleasure not partaken is destroy'd;
" I must have some good creature to attend
" On morning visits as a kind of friend."

A courteous maiden then was found to sit
Beside the lady, for her purpose fit,
Who had been train'd in all the soothing ways
And servile duties from her early days;
One who had never from her childhood known
A wish fulfill'd, a purpose of her own:
Her part it was to sit beside the dame,
And give relief in every want that came;
To soothe the pride, to watch the varying look,
And bow in silence to the dumb rebuke.

This supple being strove with all her skill
To draw her master's to her lady's will;
For they were like the magnet and the steel,
At times so distant that they could not feel;
Then would she gently move them, till she saw
That to each other they began to draw;
And then would leave them, sure on her return
In Harriet's joy her conquest to discern.

She was a mother now, and grieved to find
The nursery window caught the eastern wind;
What could she do with fears like these oppress'd?
She built a room all window'd to the west;
For sure in one so dull, so bleak, so old,
She and her children must expire with cold:
Meantime the husband murmur'd—"So he might;
"She would be judged by Cousins—Was it right?"

Water was near them, and her mind afloat,
The lady saw a cottage and a boat,
And thought what sweet excursions they might make,
How they might sail, what neighbours they might take,
And nicely would she deck the lodge upon the lake.

She now prevail'd by habit; had her will,
And found her patient husband sad and still:
Yet this displeased; she gain'd, indeed, the prize,
But not the pleasure of her victories;
Was she a child to be indulged? He knew
She would have right, but would have reason too.

Now came the time, when in her husband's face
Care, and concern, and caution she could trace;
His troubled features gloom and sadness bore,
Less he resisted, but he suffer'd more;
His nerves were shook like hers; in him her grief
Had much of sympathy, but no relief.

She could no longer read, and therefore kept
A girl to give her stories while she wept;
Better for Lady Julia's woes to cry,
Than have her own for ever in her eye:
Her husband grieved, and o'er his spirits came
Gloom, and disease attack'd his slender frame;
He felt a loathing for the wretched state
Of his concerns, so sad, so complicate;
Grief and confusion seized him in the day,
And the night pass'd in agony away:

" My ruin comes!" was his awakening thought,
And vainly through the day was comfort sought;
" There, take my all!" he said, and in his dream
Heard the door bolted, and his children scream.
And he was right, for not a day arose
That he exclaim'd not, " Will it never close?"
" Would it were come!"—but still he shifted on,
Till health, and hope, and life's fair views were gone.

Fretful herself, he of his wife in vain
For comfort sought——" He would be well again;
" Time would disorders of such nature heal!
" O! if he felt what she was doom'd to feel,
" Such sleepless nights! such broken rest! her frame
" Rack'd with diseases that she could not name!
" With pangs like hers no other was oppress'd!"
Weeping, she said, and sigh'd herself to rest.

The suffering husband look'd the world around,
And saw no friend: on him misfortune frown'd;
Him self-reproach tormented; sorely tried,
By threats he mourn'd, and by disease he died.

As weak as wailing infancy or age,
How could the widow with the world engage?

Fortune not now the means of comfort gave,
Yet all her comforts Harriet wept to have.

"My helpless babes," she said, "will nothing know,"
Yet not a single lesson would bestow;
Her debts would overwhelm her, that was sure,
But one privation would she not endure;
"We shall want bread! the thing is past a doubt."—
"Then part with Cousins!"—"Can I do without?"—
"Dismiss your servants!"—"Spare me them, I pray!"—
"At least your carriage!"—"What will people say?"—
"That useless boat, that folly on the lake!"—
"O! but what cry and scandal will it make!"
It was so hard on her, who not a thing
Had done such mischief on their heads to bring;
This was her comfort, this she would declare,
And then slept soundly on her pillow'd chair:
When not asleep, how restless was the soul
Above advice, exempted from control;
For ever begging all to be sincere,
And never willing any truth to hear;
A yellow paleness o'er her visage spread,
Her fears augmented as her comforts fled;
Views dark and dismal to her mind appear'd,
And death she sometimes woo'd, and always fear'd.

Among the clerks there was a thoughtful one,
Who still believed that something might be done;
All in his view was not so sunk and lost,
But of a trial things would pay the cost:
He judged the widow, and he saw the way
In which her husband suffer'd her to stray;
He saw entangled and perplex'd affairs,
And Time's sure hand at work on their repairs;
Children he saw, but nothing could he see
Why he might not their careful father be;
And looking keenly round him, he believed
That what was lost might quickly be retrieved

Now thought our clerk—" I must not mention love,
" That she at least must seem to disapprove;
" But I must fear of poverty enforce,
" And then consent will be a thing of course.

" Madam!" said he, " with sorrow I relate,
" That our affairs are in a dreadful state;
" I call'd on all our friends, and they declared
" They dared not meddle—not a creature dared;
" But still our perseverance chance may aid,
" And though I 'm puzzled, I am not afraid;

" If you, dear lady, will attention give
" To me, the credit of the house shall live;
" Do not, I pray you, my proposal blame,
" It is my wish to guard your husband's fame,
" And ease your trouble; then your cares resign
" To my discretion—and, in short, be mine."

" Yours! O! my stars!—Your goodness, sir, deserves
" My grateful thanks—take pity on my nerves;
" I shake and tremble at a thing so new,
" And fear 'tis what a lady should not do;
" And then to marry upon ruin's brink
" In all this hurry—What will people think?"

" Nay, there's against us neither rule nor law,
" And people's thinking is not worth a straw;
" Those who are prudent have too much to do
" With their own cares to think of me and you;
" And those who are not are so poor a race,
" That what they utter can be no disgrace:—
" Come! let us now embark, when time and tide
" Invite to sea, in happy hour decide;
" If yet we linger, both are sure to fail,
" The turning waters and the varying gale;

" Trust me, our vessel shall be ably steer'd,
" Nor will I quit her, till the rocks are clear'd."

Allured and frighten'd, soften'd and afraid,
The widow doubted, ponder'd, and obey'd:
So were they wedded, and the careful man
His reformation instantly began;
Began his state with vigour to reform,
And made a calm by laughing at the storm.

Th' attendant-maiden he dismiss'd—for why?
She might on him and love like his rely;
She needed none to form her children's mind,
That duty nature to her care assign'd;
In vain she mourn'd, it was her health he prized,
And hence enforced the measures he advised:
She wanted air; and walking, she was told,
Was safe, was pleasant!—he the carriage sold;
He found a tenant who agreed to take
The boat and cottage on the useless lake;
The house itself had now superfluous room,
And a rich lodger was induced to come.

The lady wonder'd at the sudden change,
That yet was pleasant, that was very strange;

When every deed by her desire was done,
She had no day of comfort—no, not one;
When nothing moved or stopp'd at her request,
Her heart had comfort, and her temper rest;
For all was done with kindness,—most polite
Was her new lord, and she confess'd it right;
For now she found that she could gaily live
On what the chance of common life could give:
And her sick mind was cured of every ill,
By finding no compliance with her will;
For when she saw that her desires were vain,
She wisely thought it foolish to complain.

Born for her man, she gave a gentle sigh
To her lost power, and grieved not to comply;
Within, without, the face of things improved,
And all in order and subjection moved.

As wealth increased, ambition now began
To swell the soul of the aspiring man;
In some few years he thought to purchase land,
And build a seat that Hope and Fancy plann'd;
To this a name his youthful bride should give!
Harriet, of course, not many years would live;

Then he would farm, and every soil should show
The tree that best upon the place would grow:
He would, moreover, on the Bench debate
On sundry questions—when a magistrate;
Would talk of all that to the state belongs,
The rich man's duties, and the poor man's wrongs;
He would with favourites of the people rank,
And him the weak and the oppress'd should thank.

'Tis true those children, orphans then! would need
Help in a world of trouble to succeed!
And they should have it—He should then possess
All that man needs for earthly happiness.

" Proud words, and vain!" said Doctor Young; and proud
They are; and vain, were by our clerk allow'd;
For, while he dream'd, there came both pain and cough,
And fever never tamed, and bore him off;
Young as he was, and planning schemes to live
With more delight than man's success can give;
Building a mansion in his fancy vast,
Beyond the Gothic pride of ages past!
While this was plann'd, but ere a place was sought,
The timber season'd, or the quarry wrought,

Came Death's dread summons, and the man was laid
In the poor house the simple sexton made.

But he had time for thought when he was ill,
And made his lady an indulgent will:
'Tis said he gave, in parting, his advice,
" It is sufficient to be married twice ;"
To which she answer'd, as 'tis said, again,
" There's none will have you if you're poor and plain,
" And if you're rich and handsome there is none
" Will take refusal——let the point alone "

Be this or true or false, it is her praise
She mourn'd correctly all the mourning days;
But grieve she did not, for the canker grief
Soils the complexion, and is beauty's thief;
Nothing, indeed, so much will discompose
Our public mourning as our private woes;
When tender thoughts a widow's bosom probe,
She thinks not then how graceful sits the robe;
But our nice widow look'd to every fold,
And every eye its beauty might behold!
It was becoming; she composed her face,
She look'd serenely, and she mourn'd with grace.

Some months were pass'd, but yet there wanted three
Of the full time when widows wives may be;
One trying year, and then the mind is freed,
And man may to the vacant throne succeed.

There was a tenant—he, to wit, who hired
That cot and lake, that were so much admired;
A man of spirit, one who doubtless meant,
Though he delay'd awhile, to pay his rent;
The widow's riches gave her much delight,
And some her claims, and she resolved to write.

" He knew her grievous loss, how every care
" Devolved on her, who had indeed her share;
" She had no doubt of him,—but was as sure
" As that she breathed her money was secure;
" But she had made a rash and idle vow
" To claim her dues, and she must keep it now:
" So, if it suited——"
And for this there came
A civil answer to the gentle dame:
Within the letter were excuses, thanks,
And clean Bank paper from the best of banks;
There were condolence, consolation, praise,
With some slight hints of danger in delays;

With these good things were others from the lake,
Perch that were wish'd to salmon for her sake,
And compliment as sweet as new-born hope could make.

This led to friendly visits, social calls,
And much discourse of races, rambles, balls;
But all in proper bounds, and not a word
Before its time,—the man was not absurd,
Nor was he cold; but when she might expect
A letter came, and one to this effect.

" That if his eyes had not his love convey'd,
" They had their master shamefully betray'd;
" But she must know the flame, that he was sure,
" Nor she could doubt, would long as life endure:
" Both were in widow'd state, and both possess'd
" Of ample means to make their union bless'd;
" That she had been confined he knew for truth,
" And begg'd her to have pity on her youth;
" Youth, he would say, and he desired his wife
" To have the comforts of an easy life:
" She loved a carriage, loved a decent seat
" To which they might at certain times retreat;
" Servants indeed were sorrows,—yet a few
" They still must add, and do as others do:

" She too would some attendant damsel need,
" To hear, to speak, to travel, or to read:"
In short, the man his remedies assign'd
For his foreknown diseases in the mind:—
" First," he presumed, " that in a nervous case
" Nothing was better than a change of place:"
He added, too, " 'Twas well that he could prove
" That his was pure, disinterested love;
" Not as when lawyers couple house and land
" In such a way as none can understand;
" No! thanks to Him that every good supplied,
" He had enough, and wanted nought beside!
" Merit was all."
" Well! now, she would protest,
" This was a letter prettily express'd."
To every female friend away she flew
To ask advice, and say, " What shall I do?"
She kiss'd her children,—and she said, with tears,
" I wonder what is best for you, my dears?
" How can I, darlings, to your good attend
" Without the help of some experienced friend,
" Who will protect us all, or, injured, will defend?"

The widow then ask'd counsel of her heart,
In vain, for that had nothing to impart;

But yet with that, or something for her guide,
She to her swain thus guardedly replied.

" She must believe he was sincere, for why
" Should one who needed nothing deign to lie?
" But though she could and did his truth admit,
" She could not praise him for his taste a bit;
" And yet men's tastes were various, she confess'd,
" And none could prove his own to be the best;
" It was a vast concern, including all
" That we can happiness or comfort call;
" And yet she found that those who waited long
" Before their choice, had often chosen wrong;
" Nothing, indeed, could for her loss atone,
" But 'twas the greater that she lived alone;
" She, too, had means, and therefore what the use
" Of more, that still more trouble would produce?
" And pleasure too she own'd, as well as care,
" Of which, at present, she had not her share.

" The things he offer'd, she must needs confess,
" They were all women's wishes, more or less;
" But were expensive; though a man of sense
" Would by his prudence lighten the expense:

" Prudent he was, but made a sad mistake
" When he proposed her faded face to take;
" And yet 'tis said there's beauty that will last
" When the rose withers and the bloom be past.

" One thing displeased her,—that he could suppose
" He might so soon his purposes disclose;
" Yet had she hints of such intent before,
" And would excuse him if he wrote no more;
" What would the world?—and yet she judged them fools
" Who let the world's suggestions be their rules;
" What would her friends?—Yet in her own affairs
" It was her business to decide, not theirs:
" Adieu! then, sir," she added; " thus you find
" The changeless purpose of a steady mind,
" In one now left alone, but to her fate resign'd."

The marriage follow'd; and th' experienced dame
Consider'd what the conduct that became
A thrice-devoted lady—She confess'd
That when indulged she was but more distress'd;
And by her second husband when controll'd,
Her life was pleasant, though her love was cold;

" Then let me yield," she said, and with a sigh,
" Let me to wrong submit, with right comply."

Alas! obedience may mistake, and they
Who reason not will err when they obey;
And fated was the gentle dame to find
Her duty wrong, and her obedience blind.

The man was kind, but would have no dispute,
His love and kindness both were absolute;
She needed not her wishes to express
To one who urged her on to happiness;
For this he took her to the lakes and seas,
To mines and mountains, nor allow'd her ease,
She must be pleased, he said, and he must live to please.

He hurried north and south, and east and west,
When age required they would have time to rest:
He in the richest dress her form array'd,
And cared not what he promised, what he paid;
She should share all his pleasures as her own,
And see whatever could be sought or shown.

This run of pleasure for a time she bore,
And then affirm'd that she could taste no more;

She loved it while its nature it retain'd,
But made a duty, it displeased and pain'd:
" Have we not means?" the joyous husband cried;
" But I am wearied out," the wife replied;
" Wearied with pleasure! Thing till now unheard—
" Are all that sweeten trouble to be fear'd?
" 'Tis but the sameness tires you,—cross the seas,
" And let us taste the world's varieties.

" 'Tis said, in Paris that a man may live
" In all the luxuries a world can give,
" And in a space confined to narrow bound
" All the enjoyments of our life are found;
" There we may eat and drink, may dance and dress,
" And in its very essence joy possess;
" May see a moving crowd of lovely dames,
" May win a fortune at your favourite games;
" May hear the sounds that ravish human sense,
" And all without receding foot from thence."

The conquer'd wife, resistless and afraid,
To the strong call a sad obedience paid.

As we an infant in its pain, with sweets
Loved once, now loath'd, torment him till he eats,

Who on the authors of his new distress
Looks trembling with disgusted weariness,
So Harriet felt, so look'd, and seem'd to say,
" O! for a day of rest, an holiday!"

At length her courage rising with her fear,
She said, " Our pleasures may be bought too dear!"

To this he answer'd—" Dearest! from thy heart
" Bid every fear of evil times depart;
" I ever trusted in the trying hour
" To my good stars, and felt the ruling power;
" When want drew nigh, his threat'ning speed was stopp'd,
" Some virgin aunt, some childless uncle dropp'd;
" In all his threats I sought expedients new,
" And my last, best resource was found in you."

Silent and sad the wife beheld her doom,
And sat her down to see the ruin come;
And meet the ills that rise where money fails,
Debts, threats and duns, bills, bailiffs, writs and jails.

These was she spared; ere yet by want oppress'd,
Came one more fierce than bailiff in arrest;

Amid a scene where Pleasure never came,
Though never ceased the mention of his name,
The husband's heated blood received the breath
Of strong disease, that bore him to his death.

Her all collected,—whether great or small
The sum, I know not, but collected all;—
The widow'd lady to her cot retired,
And there she lives delighted and admired:
Civil to all, compliant and polite,
Disposed to think "whatever is, is right;"
She wears the widow's weeds, she gives the widow's mite.
At home awhile, she in the autumn finds
The sea an object for reflecting minds,
And change for tender spirits; there she reads,
And weeps in comfort in her graceful weeds.

What gives our tale its moral? Here we find
That wives like this are not for rule design'd,
Nor yet for blind submission; happy they,
Who while they feel it pleasant to obey,
Have yet a kind companion at their side
Who in their journey will his power divide,
Or yield the reins, and bid the lady guide;

Then points the wonders of the way, and makes
The duty pleasant that she undertakes;
He shows her objects as they move along,
And gently rules the movements that are wrong:
He tells her all the skilful driver's art,
And smiles to see how well she acts her part;
Nor praise denies to courage or to skill,
In using power that he resumes at will.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XVIII.

ELLEN.

A Morning Ride—A Purchase of the Squire—The Way to it described—The former Proprietor—Richard's Return —Inquiries respecting a Lady whom he had seen—Her History related—Her Attachment to a Tutor—They are parted—Impediments removed—How removed in vain—Fate of the Lover—Of Ellen.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XVIII.

ELLEN.

Bleak was the morn—said Richard, with a sigh,
" I must depart!"—" That, Brother, I deny,"
Said George—" You may; but I perceive not why."

This point before had been discuss'd, but still
The guest submitted to the ruling will;
But every day gave rise to doubt and fear,—
He heard not now, as he was wont to hear,
That all was well!—though little was express'd,
It seem'd to him the writer was distress'd;
Restrain'd! there was attempt and strife to please,
Pains and endeavour—not Matilda's ease;—
Not the pure lines of love! the guileless friend
In all her freedom—What could this portend?

" Fancy!" said George, " the self-tormentor's pain"—
And Richard still consented to remain.

" Ride you this fair cool morning?" said the squire:
" Do—for a purchase I have made inquire,
" And with you take a will complacently t' admire:
" Southward at first, dear Richard, make your way,
" Cross Hilton Bridge, move on through Breken Clay,
" At Dunham Wood turn duly to the east,
" And there your eyes upon the ocean feast;
" Then ride above the cliff, or ride below,
" You'll be enraptured, for your taste I know;
" It is a prospect that a man might stay
" To his bride hastening on his wedding-day;
" At Tilburn Sluice once more ascend and view
" A decent house; an ample garden too,
" And planted well behind—a lively scene, and new;
" A little taste, a little pomp display'd,
" By a dull man, who had retired from trade
" To enjoy his leisure—Here he came prepared
" To farm, nor cost in preparation spared;
" But many works he purchased, some he read,
" And often rose with projects in his head,
" Of crops in courses raised, of herds by matching bred.

" We had just found these little humours out,
" Just saw—he saw not—what he was about;
" Just met as neighbours, still disposed to meet,
" Just learn'd the current tales of Dowling Street,
" And were just thinking of our female friends,
" Saying—' You know not what the man intends,
" ' A rich, kind, hearty'—and it might be true
" Something he wish'd, but had not time to do;
" A cold ere yet the falling leaf! of small
" Effect till then, was fatal in the fall;
" And of that house was his possession brief—
" Go; and guard well against the falling leaf.

" But hear me, Richard, looking to my ease,
" Try if you can find something that will please;
" Faults if you see, and such as must abide,
" Say they are small, or say that I can hide;
" But faults that I can change, remove, or mend,
" These like a foe detect—or like a friend.

" Mark well the rooms, and their proportions learn,
" In each some use, some elegance discern;
" Observe the garden, its productive wall,
" And find a something to commend in all;

" Then should you praise them in a knowing way,
" I'll take it kindly—that is well—be gay.

" Nor pass the pebbled cottage as you rise
" Above the sluice, till you have fix'd your eyes
" On the low woodbined window, and have seen,
" So fortune favour you, the ghost within;
" Take but one look, and then your way pursue,
" It flies all strangers, and it knows not you."

Richard return'd, and by his Brother stood,
Not in a pensive, not in pleasant mood;
But by strong feeling into stillness wrought,
As nothing thinking, or with too much thought;
Or like a man who means indeed to speak,
But would his hearer should his purpose seek.

When George—" What is it, Brother, you would hide?
" Or what confess?"—" Who is she?" he replied,
" That angel whom I saw, to whom is she allied?
" Of this fair being let me understand,
" And I will praise your purchase, house and land.

" Hers was that cottage on the rising ground,
" West of the waves, and just beyond their sound;

" 'Tis larger than the rest, and whence, indeed,
" You might expect a lady to proceed;
" But O! this creature, far as I could trace,
" Will soon be carried to another place.

" Fair, fragile thing! I said, when first my eye
" Caught hers, wilt thou expand thy wings and fly?
" Or wilt thou vanish? beauteous spirit, stay!—
" For will it not (I question'd) melt away?
" No! it was mortal—I unseen was near,
" And saw the bosom's sigh, the standing tear!
" She thought profoundly, for I stay'd to look,
" And first she read, then laid aside her book;
" Then on her hand reclined her lovely head,
" And seem'd unconscious of the tear she shed.

" ' Art thou so much,' I said, ' to grief a prey?'
" Till pity pain'd me, and I rode away.

" Tell me, my Brother, is that sorrow dread
" For the great change that bears her to the dead?
" Has she connexions? does she love?—I feel
" Pity and grief, wilt thou her woes reveal?"

" They are not lasting, Richard, they are woes
" Chastised and meek! she sings them to repose;
" If not, she reasons; if they still remain,
" She finds resource, that none shall find in vain.

" Whether disease first grew upon regret,
" Or nature gave it, is uncertain yet,
" And must remain; the frame was slightly made,
" That grief assail'd, and all is now decay'd!

" But though so willing from the world to part,
" I must not call her case a broken heart;
" Nor dare I take upon me to maintain
" That hearts once broken never heal again."

She was an only daughter, one whose sire
Loved not that girls to knowledge should aspire;
But he had sons, and Ellen quickly caught
Whatever they were by their masters taught;
This, when the father saw—" It is the turn
" Of her strange mind," said he, " but let her learn;

" 'Tis almost pity with that shape and face—
" But is a fashion, and brings no disgrace;
" Women of old wrote verse, or for the stage
" Brought forth their works! they now are reasoners sage,
" And with severe pursuits dare grapple and engage.
" If such her mind, I shall in vain oppose,
" If not, her labours of themselves will close."

Ellen, 'twas found, had skill without pretence,
And silenced envy by her meek good sense;
That Ellen learnt, her various knowledge proved;
Soft words and tender looks, that Ellen loved;
For he who taught her brothers found in her
A constant, ready, eager auditor;
This he perceived, nor could his joy disguise,
It tuned his voice, it sparkled in his eyes.

Not very young, nor very handsome he,
But very fit an Abelard to be;
His manner and his meekness hush'd alarm
In all but Ellen—Ellen felt the charm;
Hers was fond " filial love," she found delight
To have her mind's dear father in her sight;

But soon the borrow'd notion she resign'd!
He was no father—even to the mind.

But Ellen had her comforts—" He will speak,"
She said, " for he beholds me fond and weak;
" Fond, and he therefore may securely plead,—
" Weak, I have therefore of his firmness need;
" With whom my father will his Ellen trust,
" Because he knows him to be kind and just."

Alas! too well the conscious lover knew
The parent's mind, and well the daughter's too;
He felt of duty the imperious call,
Beheld his danger, and must fly or fall.
What would the parent, what his pupils think?
O! he was standing on perdition's brink:
In his dilemma flight alone remain'd,
And could he fly whose very soul was chain'd?
He knew she loved; she tried not to conceal
A hope she thought that virtue's self might feel.

Ever of her and her frank heart afraid,
Doubting himself, he sought in absence, aid,
And had resolved on flight, but still the act delay'd;

At last so high his apprehension rose,
That he would both his love and labour close.

" While undisclosed my fear each instant grows,
" And I lament the guilt that no one knows,
" Success undoes me, and the view that cheers
" All other men, all dark to me appears!"

Thus as he thought, his Ellen at his side
Her soothing softness to his grief applied;
With like effect as water cast on flame,
For he more heated and confused became,
And broke in sorrow from the wondering maid,
Who was at once offended and afraid;
Yet " Do not go!" she cried, and was awhile obey'd.

" Art thou then ill, dear friend?" she ask'd, and took
His passive hand—" How very pale thy look!
" And thou art cold, and tremblest—pray thee tell
" Thy friend, thy Ellen, is her master well?
" And let her with her loving care attend
" To all that vexes and disturbs her friend."

" Nay, my dear lady! we have all our cares,
" And I am troubled with my poor affairs:
" Thou canst not aid me, Ellen; could it be
" And might it, doubtless, I would fly to thee;
" But we have sundry duties, and must all,
" Hard as it may be, go where duties call—
" Suppose the trial were this instant thine,
" Couldst thou the happiest of thy views resign
" At duty's strong command?"—" If thou wert by,"
Said the unconscious maiden, " I would try!"—
And as she sigh'd she heard the soft responsive sigh.

And then assuming steadiness, " Adieu!"
He cried, and from the grieving Ellen flew;
And to her father with a bleeding heart
He went, his grief and purpose to impart;
Told of his health, and did in part confess
That he should love the noble maiden less.

The parent's pride to sudden rage gave way—
" And the girl loves! that plainly you would say—
" And you with honour, in your pride, retire!—
" Sir, I your prudence envy and admire."

But here the father saw the rising frown,
And quickly let his lofty spirit down.

" Forgive a parent!—I may well excuse
" A girl who could perceive such worth and choose
" To make it hers; we must not look to meet
" All we might wish;—Is age itself discreet?
" Where conquest may not be, 'tis prudence to retreat."

Then with the kindness worldly minds assume
He praised the self-pronounced and rigorous doom;
He wonder'd not that one so young should love,
And much he wish'd he could the choice approve;
Much he lamented such a mind to lose,
And begg'd to learn if he could aid his views,
If such were form'd—then closed the short account,
And to a shilling paid the full amount.

So Cecil left the mansion, and so flew
To foreign shores, without an interview;
He must not say, I love—he could not say, Adieu!

Long was he absent; as a guide to youth,
With grief contending, and in search of truth.

In courting peace, and trying to forget
What was so deeply interesting yet.

A friend in England gave him all the news,
A sad indulgence that he would not lose;
He told how Ellen suffer'd, how they sent
The maid from home in sullen discontent,
With some relation on the Lakes to live,
In all the sorrow such retirements give;
And there she roved among the rocks, and took
Moss from the stone, and pebbles from the brook;
Gazed on the flies that settled on the flowers,
And so consumed her melancholy hours.

Again he wrote—The father then was dead,
And Ellen to her native village fled,
With native feeling—there she oped her door,
Her heart, her purse, and comforted the poor,
The sick, the sad,—and there she pass'd her days,
Deserving much, but never seeking praise,
Her task to guide herself, her joy the fallen to raise.
Nor would she nicely faults and merits weigh,
But loved the impulse of her soul t' obey;
The prayers of all she heard, their sufferings view'd,
Nor turn'd from any, save when Love pursued;

For though to love disposed, to kindness prone,
She thought of Cecil, and she lived alone.

Thus heard the lover of the life she past
Till his return,—and he return'd at last;
For he had saved, and was a richer man
Than when to teach and study he began;
Something his father left, and he could fly
To the loved country where he wish'd to die.

" And now," he said, " this maid with gentle mind
" May I not hope to meet, as good, as kind,
" As in the days when first her friend she knew
" And then could trust—and he indeed is true?
" She knew my motives, and she must approve
" The man who dared to sacrifice his love
" And fondest hopes to virtue: virtuous she,
" Nor can resent that sacrifice in me."

He reason'd thus, but fear'd, and sought the friend
In his own country, where his doubts must end;
They then together to her dwelling came,
And by a servant sent her lover's name,
A modest youth, whom she before had known,
His favourite then, and doubtless *then* her own.

They in the carriage heard the servants speak
At Ellen's door—" A maid so heavenly meek,
" Who would all pain extinguish! Yet will she
" Pronounce my doom, I feel the certainty!"—
" Courage!" the friend exclaim'd, " the lover's fear
" Grows without ground;" but Cecil would not hear:
He seem'd some dreadful object to explore,
And fix'd his fearful eye upon the door,
Intensely longing for reply—the thing
That must to him his future fortune bring;
And now it brought! like Death's cold hand it came—
" The lady was a stranger to the name!"

Backward the lover in the carriage fell,
Weak, but not fainting—" All," said he, " is well!
" Return with me—I have no more to seek!"
And this was all the woful man would speak.

Quickly he settled all his worldly views,
And sail'd from home, his fiercer pains to lose
And nurse the milder—now with labour less
He might his solitary world possess,
And taste the bitter-sweet of love in idleness.

Greece was the land he chose; a mind decay'd
And ruin'd there through glorious ruin stray'd;
There read, and walk'd, and mused,—there loved, and
wept, and pray'd.
Nor would he write, nor suffer hope to live,
But gave to study all his mind could give;
Till, with the dead conversing, he began
To lose the habits of a living man,
Save that he saw some wretched, them he tried
To soothe,—some doubtful, them he strove to guide;
Nor did he lose the mind's ennobling joy
Of that new state that death must not destroy;
What Time had done we know not,—Death was nigh,
To his first hopes the lover gave a sigh,
But hopes more new and strong confirm'd his wish to die.

Meantime poor Ellen in her cottage thought
" That he would seek her—sure she should be sought
" She did not mean—It was an evil hour,
" Her thoughts were guardless, and beyond her power;
" And for one speech, and that in rashness made!
" Have I no friend to soothe him and persuade?
" He must not leave me—He again will come,
" And we shall have one hope, one heart, one home!"

But when she heard that he on foreign ground
Sought his lost peace, hers never more was found;
But still she felt a varying hope that love
Would all these slight impediments remove;—
" Has he no friend to tell him that our pride
" Resents a moment and is satisfied?
" Soon as the hasty sacrifice is made,
" A look will soothe us, and a tear persuade;
" Have I no friend to say ' Return again,
" ' Reveal your wishes, and relieve her pain?' "

With suffering mind the maid her prospects view'd,
That hourly varied with the varying mood;
As past the day, the week, the month, the year,
The faint hope sicken'd, and gave place to fear.

No Cecil came!—" Come, peevish and unjust!"
Sad Ellen cried, " why cherish this disgust?
" Thy Ellen's voice could charm thee once, but thou
" Canst nothing see or hear of Ellen now!"

Yes! she was right; the grave on him was closed,
And there the lover and the friend reposed.

The news soon reach'd her, and she then replied
In his own manner—" I am satisfied!"

To her a lover's legacy is paid,
The darling wealth of the devoted maid;
From this her best and favourite books she buys,
From this are doled the favourite charities;
And when a tale or face affects her heart,
This is the fund that must relief impart.

Such have the ten last years of Ellen been!
Her very last that sunken eye has seen!
That half angelic being still must fade
Till all the angel in the mind be made;—
And now the closing scene will shortly come—
She cannot visit sorrow at her home;
But still she feeds the hungry, still prepares
The usual softeners of the peasant's cares,
And though she prays not with the dying now,
She teaches them to die, and shows them how.

" Such is my tale, dear Richard, but that told
" I must all comments on the text withhold;

" What is the sin of grief I cannot tell,
" Nor of the sinners who have loved too well;
" But to the cause of mercy I incline,
" Or, O! my Brother, what a fate is mine!"

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIX.

WILLIAM BAILEY.

Discourse on Jealousy—Of unsuspicious Men—Visit William and his Wife—His Dwelling—Story of William and Fanny—Character of both—Their Contract—Fanny's Visit to an Aunt—Its Consequences—Her Father's Expectation—His Death—William a Wanderer—His Mode of Living—The Acquaintance he forms—Travels across the Kingdom—Whom he finds—The Event of their Meeting.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIX.

WILLIAM BAILEY.

The letters Richard in a morning read
To quiet and domestic comforts led;
And George, who thought the world could not supply
Comfort so pure, reflected with a sigh;
Then would pursue the subject half in play,
Half earnest, till the sadness wore away.

They spoke of Passion's errors, Love's disease,
His pains, afflictions, wrongs, and jealousies;
Of Herod's vile commandment—that his wife
Should live no more, when he no more had life;
He could not bear that royal Herod's spouse
Should, as a widow, make her second vows;
Or that a mortal with his queen should wed,
Or be the rival of the mighty dead.

" Herods," said Richard, " doubtless may be found,
" But haply do not in the world abound;
" Ladies, indeed, a dreadful lot would have,
" If jealousy could act beyond the grave:
" No doubt Othellos every place supply,
" Though every Desdemona does not die;
" But there are lovers in the world, who live
" Slaves to the sex, and every fault forgive."

" I know," said George, " a happy man and kind,
" Who finds his wife is all he wish'd to find,
" A mild, good man, who, if he nothing sees,
" Will suffer nothing to disturb his ease;
" Who, ever yielding both to smiles and sighs,
" Admits no story that a wife denies,—
" She guides his mind, and she directs his eyes.

" Richard, there dwells within a mile a pair
" Of good examples,—I will guide you there:
" Such man is William Bailey,—but his spouse
" Is virtue's self since she had made her vows:
" I speak of ancient stories, long worn out,
" That honest William would not talk about;
" But he will sometimes check her starting tear,
" And call her self-correction too severe.

" In their own inn the gentle pair are placed,
" Where you behold the marks of William's taste:
" They dwell in plenty, in respect, and peace,
" Landlord and lady of the Golden Fleece:
" Public indeed their calling,—but there come
" No brawl, no revel to that decent room;
" All there is still, and comely to behold,
" Mild as the fleece, and pleasant as the gold;
" But mild and pleasant as they now appear,
" They first experienced many a troubled year;
" And that, if known, might not command our praise,
" Like the smooth tenor of their present days.

" Our hostess, now so grave and steady grown,
" Has had some awkward trials of her own:
" She was not always so resign'd and meek,—
" Yet can I little of her failings speak;
" Those she herself will her misfortunes deem,
" And slides discreetly from the dubious theme;
" But you shall hear the tale that I will tell,
" When we have seen the mansion where they dwell."

They saw the mansion,—and the couple made
Obeisance due, and not without parade:

" His honour, still obliging, took delight
" To make them pleasant in each other's sight;
" It was their duty—they were very sure
" It was their pleasure."
This they could endure,
Nor turn'd impatient——In the room around
Were care and neatness: instruments were found
For sacred music, books with prints and notes
By learned men and good, whom William quotes
In mode familiar—Beveridge, Dodderidge, Hall,
Pyle, Whitby, Hammond—he refers to all.

Next they beheld his garden, fruitful, nice,
And, as he said, his little paradise.

In man and wife appear'd some signs of pride,
Which they perceived not, or they would not hide,—
" Their honest saving, their good name, their skill,
" His honour's land, which they had grace to till;
" And more his favour shown, with all their friends good will."

This past, the visit was with kindness closed,
And George was ask'd to do as he proposed.

" Richard," said he, " though I myself explore
" With no distaste the annals of the poor,
" And may with safety to a brother show
" What of my humble friends I chance to know,
" Richard, there are who call the subjects low.

" The host and hostess of the Fleece—'tis base—
" Would I could cast some glory round the place!

" The lively heroine once adorn'd a farm,—
" And William's virtue has a kind of charm:
" Nor shall we, in our apprehension, need
" Riches or rank——I think I may proceed:
" Virtue and worth there are who will not see
" In humble dress, but low they cannot be."

The youth's addresses pleased his favourite maid,—
They wish'd for union, but were both afraid;
They saw the wedded poor,—and fear the bliss delay'd:
Yet they appear'd a happier lass and swain
Than those who will not reason or refrain.

William was honest, simple, gentle, kind,
Laborious, studious, and to thrift inclined;

More neat than youthful peasant in his dress,
And yet so careful, that it cost him less:
He kept from inns, though doom'd an inn to keep,
And all his pleasures and pursuits were cheap:
Yet would the youth perform a generous deed,
When reason saw or pity felt the need;
He of his labour and his skill would lend,
Nay, of his money, to a suffering friend.

William had manual arts,—his room was graced
With carving quaint, that spoke the master's taste;
But if that taste admitted some dispute,
He charm'd the nymphs with flageolet and flute.

Constant at church, and there a little proud,
He sang with boldness, and he read aloud;
Self-taught to write, he his example took
And form'd his letters from a printed book.

I've heard of ladies who profess'd to see
In a man's writing what his mind must be;
As Doctor Spurzheim's pupils, when they look
Upon a skull, will read it as a book—
Our talents, tendencies, and likings trace,
And find for all the measure and the place:

Strange times! when thus we are completely read
By man or woman, by the hand or head!
Believe who can,—but William's even mind
All who beheld might in his writing find;
His not the scratches where we try in vain
Meanings and words to construe or explain.

But with our village hero to proceed,—
He read as learned clerks are wont to read;
Solemn he was in tone, and slow in pace,
By nature gifted both with strength and grace.

Black parted locks his polish'd forehead press'd;
His placid looks an easy mind confess'd;
His smile content, and seldom more, convey'd;
Not like the smile of fair illusive maid,
When what she feels is hid, and what she wills betray'd.

The lighter damsels call'd his manner prim,
And laugh'd at virtue so array'd in him;
But they were wanton, as he well replied,
And hoped their own would not be strongly tried:
Yet was he full of glee, and had his strokes
Of rustic wit, his repartees and jokes;

Nor was averse, ere yet he pledged his love,
To stray with damsels in the shady grove;
When he would tell them, as they walk'd along,
How the birds sang, and imitate their song:
In fact, our rustic had his proper taste,
Was with peculiar arts and manners graced—
And Absolon had been, had Absolon been chaste.

Frances, like William, felt her heart incline
To neat attire—but Frances would be fine:
Though small the farm, the farmer's daughter knew
Her rank in life, and she would have it too:
This, and this only, gave the lover pain,
He thought it needless, and he judged it vain:
Advice in hints he to the fault applied,
And talk'd of sin, of vanity, and pride.

"And what is proud," said Frances, "but to stand
"Singing at church, and sawing thus your hand?
"Looking at heaven above, as if to bring
"The holy angels down to hear you sing?
"And when you write, you try with all your skill,
"And cry, no wonder that you wrote so ill!
"For you were ever to yourself a rule,
"And humbly add, you never were at school—

" Is that not proud?—And I have heard beside,
" The proudest creatures have the humblest pride:
" If you had read the volumes I have hired,
" You 'd see your fault, nor try to be admired;
" For they who read such books can always tell
" The fault within, and read the mind as well."

William had heard of hiring books before,
He knew she read, and he inquired no more;
On him the subject was completely lost,
What he regarded was the time and cost;
Yet that was trifling—just a present whim,
" Novels and stories! what were they to him?"

With such slight quarrels, or with those as slight,
They lived in love, and dream'd of its delight.
Her duties Fanny knew, both great and small,
And she with diligence observed them all;
If e'er she fail'd a duty to fulfil,
'Twas childish error, not rebellious will;
For her much reading, though it touch'd her heart,
Could neither vice nor indolence impart.

Yet, when from William and her friends retired,
She found her reading had her mind inspired

With hopes and thoughts of high mysterious things,
Such as the early dream of kindness brings;
And then she wept, and wonder'd as she read,
And new emotions in her heart were bred:
She sometimes fancied that when love was true
'Twas more than she and William ever knew;
More than the shady lane in summer-eve,
More than the sighing when he took his leave;
More than his preference when the lads advance
And choose their partners for the evening dance;
Nay, more than midnight thoughts and morning dreams,
Or talk when love and marriage are the themes;
In fact, a something not to be defined,
Of all subduing, all commanding kind,
That fills the fondest heart, that rules the proudest mind.

But on her lover Fanny still relied,
Her best companion, her sincerest guide,
On whom she could rely, in whom she would confide.

All jealous fits were past; in either now
Were tender wishes for the binding vow;
There was no secret one alone possess'd,
There was no hope that warm'd a single breast;

Both felt the same concerns their thoughts employ,
And neither knew one solitary joy.

Then why so easy, William? why consent
To wait so long? thou wilt at last repent;
" Within a month," does Care and Prudence say,
If all be ready, linger not a day;
Ere yet the choice be made, on choice debate,
But having chosen, dally not with fate.

While yet to wait the pair were half content,
And half disposed their purpose to repent,
A spinster-aunt, in some great baron's place,
Would see a damsel, pride of all her race:
And Fanny, flatter'd by the matron's call,
Obey'd her aunt, and long'd to see the Hall;
For halls and castles in her fancy wrought,
And she accounts of love and wonder sought;
There she expected strange events to learn,
And take in tender secrets fond concern;
There she expected lovely nymphs to view,
Perhaps to hear and meet their lovers too;
The Julias, tender souls! the Henrys kind and true:
There she expected plottings to detect,
And—but I know not what she might expect—

All she was taught in books to be her guide,
And all that nature taught the nymph beside.

Now that good dame had in the castle dwelt
So long that she for all its people felt;
She kept her sundry keys, and ruled o'er all,
Female and male, domestics in the hall;
By her lord trusted, worthy of her trust,
Proud but obedient, bountiful but just.

She praised her lucky stars, that in her place
She never found neglect, nor felt disgrace;
To do her duty was her soul's delight,
This her inferiors would to theirs excite,
This her superiors notice and requite;
To either class she gave the praises due,
And still more grateful as more favour'd grew:
Her lord and lady were of peerless worth,
In power unmatch'd, in glory and in birth;
And such the virtue of the noble race,
It reach'd the meanest servant in the place;
All, from the chief attendant on my lord
To the groom's helper, had her civil word;
From Miss Montregor, who the ladies taught,
To the rude lad who in the garden wrought;

From the first favourite to the meanest drudge,
Were no such women, heaven should be her judge;
Whatever stains were theirs, let them reside
In that pure place, and they were mundified;
The sun of favour on their vileness shone,
And all their faults like morning mists were gone.

There was Lord Robert! could she have her choice,
From the world's masters he should have her voice;
So kind and gracious in his noble ways,
It was a pleasure speaking in his praise:
And Lady Catharine,—O! a prince's pride
Might by one smile of hers be gratified;
With her would monarchs all their glory share,
And in her presence banish all their care.

Such was the matron, and to her the maid
Was by her lover carefully convey'd.

When William first the invitation read
It some displeasure in his spirit bred,
Not that one jealous thought the man possess'd,
He was by fondness, not by fear distress'd;
But when his Fanny to his mind convey'd
The growing treasures of the ancient maid,

The thirty years, come June, of service past,
Her lasting love, her life that would not last;
Her power! her place! what interest! what respect
She had acquired—and shall we her neglect?

"No, Frances, no!" he answer'd, "you are right;
"But things appear in such a different light!"

Her parents blest her, and as well became
Their love advised her, that they might not blame;
They said, "If she should earl or countess meet
"She should be humble, cautious, and discreet;
"Humble, but not abased, remembering all
"Are kindred sinners,—children of the fall;
"That from the earth our being we receive,
"And are all equal when the earth we leave."

They then advised her in a modest way
To make replies to what my lord might say;
Her aunt would aid her, who was now become
With nobles noble, and with lords at home.

So went the pair; and William told at night
Of a reception gracious and polite;

He spake of galleries long and pictures tall,
The handsome parlours, the prodigious hall;
The busts, the statues, and the floors of stone,
The storied arras, and the vast saloon,
In which was placed an Indian chest and screen,
With figures such as he had never seen:
He told of these as men enraptured tell,
And gave to all their praise, and all was well.

Left by the lover, the desponding maid
Was of the matron's ridicule afraid;
But when she heard a welcome frank and kind,
The wonted firmness repossess'd her mind;
Pleased by the looks of love her aunt display'd,
Her fond professions, and her kind parade.

In her own room, and with her niece apart,
She gave up all the secrets of her heart;
And, grown familiar, bid her Fanny come,
Partake her cheer, and make herself at home.

Shut in that room, upon its cheerful board
She laid the comforts of no vulgar hoard;

Then press'd the damsel both with love and pride,
For both she felt—and would not be denied.

Grace she pronounced before and after meat,
And bless'd her God that she could talk and eat;
Then with new glee she sang her patron's praise——
" He had no paltry arts, no pimping ways;
" She had the roast and boil'd of every day,
" That sent the poor with grateful hearts away;
" And she was grateful——Come, my darling, think
" Of them you love the best, and let us drink."

And now she drank the healths of those above,
Her noble friends, whom she must ever love;
But not together, not the young and old,
But one by one, the number duly told;
And told their merits too—there was not one
Who had not said a gracious thing or done;
Nor could she praise alone, but she would take
A cheerful glass for every favourite's sake,
And all were favourites—till the rosy cheek
Spoke for the tongue that nearly ceased to speak;
That rosy cheek that now began to shine,
And show the progress of the rosy wine:

But there she ended—felt the singing head,
Then pray'd as custom will'd, and so to bed.

The morn was pleasant, and the ancient maid
With her fair niece about the mansion stray'd;
There was no room without th' appropriate tale
Of blood and murder, female sprite or male;
There was no picture that th' historic dame
Pass'd by and gave not its peculiar fame;
The births, the visits, weddings, burials, all
That chanced for ages at the noble Hall.

These and each revolution she could state,
And give strange anecdotes of love and hate;
This was her first delight, her pride, her boast,
She told of many an heiress, many a toast,
Of Lady Ellen's flight, of Lord Orlando's ghost;
The maid turn'd pale, and what should then ensue
But wine and cake—the dame was frighten'd too.

The aunt and niece now walk'd about the grounds,
And sometimes met the gentry in their rounds;
"Do let us turn!" the timid girl exclaim'd—
"Turn!" said the aunt, "of what are you ashamed?

" What is there frightful in such looks as those?
" What is it, child, you fancy or suppose?
" Look at Lord Robert, see if you can trace
" More than true honour in that handsome face!

" What! you must think, by blushing in that way,
" My lord has something about love to say;
" But I assure you that he never spoke
" Such things to me in earnest or in joke,
" And yet I meet him in all sorts of times,
" When wicked men are thinking of their crimes.

" There! let them pass——Why, yes, indeed 'tis true
" That was a look, and was design'd for you;
" But what the wonder when the sight is new?
" For my lord's virtue you may take my word,
" He would not do a thing that was absurd."

A month had pass'd; " And when will Fanny come?"
The lover ask'd, and found the parents dumb;
They had not heard for more than half the space,
And the poor maiden was in much disgrace;
Silence so long they could not understand,
And this of one who wrote so neat a hand;

Their sister sure would send were aught amiss,
But youth is thoughtless—there is hope in this.

As time elapsed, their wonder changed to wo,
William would lose another day, and go;
Yet if she should be wilful and remain,
He had no power to take her home again:
But he would go:—He went, and he return'd,—
And in his look the pair his tale discern'd;
Stupid in grief, it seem'd not that he knew
How he came home, or what he should pursue:
Fanny was gone!—her aunt was sick in bed,
Dying, she said—none cared if she were dead;
Her charge, his darling, was decoy'd, was fled!
But at what time, and whither, and with whom,
None seem'd to know—all surly, shy, or dumb.

Each blamed himself, all blamed the erring maid,
They vow'd revenge; they cursed their fate, and pray'd.
Moved by his grief, the father sought the place,
Ask'd for his girl, and talk'd of her disgrace;
Spoke of the villain, on whose cursed head
He pray'd that vengeance might be amply shed;
Then sought his sister, and beheld her grief,
Her pain, her danger,—this was no relief.

" Where is my daughter? bring her to my sight!"—
" Brother, I'm rack'd and tortured day and night."—
" Talk not to me! What grief have you to tell,
" Is your soul rack'd, or is your bosom hell?
" Where is my daughter?"—" She would take her oath
" For their right doing, for she knew them both,
" And my young lord was honour."—" Woman, cease!
" And give your guilty conscience no such peace—
" You've sold the wretched girl, you have betray'd your
niece."—
" The Lord be good! and O! the pains that come
" In limb and body—Brother, get you home!
" Your voice runs through me,—every angry word,
" If he should hear it, would offend my lord."

" Has he a daughter? let her run away
" With a poor dog, and hear what he will say!
" No matter what, I'll ask him for his son"—
" And so offend? Now, brother, pray be gone!"

My lord appear'd, perhaps by pity moved,
And kindly said he no such things approved;
Nay, he was angry with the foolish boy,
Who might his pleasures at his ease enjoy;

The thing was wrong—he hoped the farm did well,—
The angry father doom'd the farm to hell;
He then desired to see the villain-son,
Though my lord warn'd him such excess to shun;
Told him he pardon'd, though he blamed such rage,
And bade him think upon his state and age.

" Think! yes, my lord! but thinking drives me mad—
" Give me my child!—Where is she to be had?
" I'm old and poor, but I with both can feel,
" And so shall he that could a daughter steal!
" Think you, my lord, I can be so bereft
" And feel no vengeance for the villain's theft?
" Old if I am, could I the robber meet
" I'd lay his breathless body at my feet—
" Was that a smile, my lord? think you your boy
" Will both the father and the child destroy?"

My lord replied—" I'm sorry from my soul!
" But boys are boys, and there is no control."

" So, for your great ones Justice slumbers then!
" If men are poor they must not feel as men—

" Will your son marry?"—" Marry!" said my lord,
" Your daughter?—marry—no, upon my word!"

" What then, our stations differ!—but your son
" Thought not of that—his crime has made them one,
" In guilt united—She shall be his wife,
" Or I th' avenger that will take his life!"

" Old man, I pity and forgive you; rest
" In hope and comfort,—be not so distress'd,
" Things that seem bad oft happen for the best;
" The girl has done no more than thousands do,
" Nor has the boy—they laugh at me and you."—
" And this my vengeance—curse him!"—" Nay, forbear;
" I spare your frenzy, in compassion spare."

" Spare me, my lord! and what have I to dread?
" O! spare not, heaven, the thunder o'er his head—
" The bolt he merits!"——
Such was his redress;
And he return'd to brood upon distress.

And what of William?—William from the time
Appear'd partaker both of grief and crime;

He cared for nothing, nothing he pursued,
But walk'd about in melancholy mood;
He ceased to labour,—all he loved before
He now neglected, and would see no more;
He said his flute brought only to his mind
When he was happy, and his Fanny kind;
And his loved walks, and every object near,
And every evening-sound she loved to hear,
The shady lane, broad heath, and starry sky,
Brought home reflections, and he wish'd to die:
Yet there he stray'd, because he wish'd to shun
The world he hated, where his part was done;
As if, though lingering on the earth, he there
Had neither hope nor calling, tie nor care.

At length a letter from the daughter came,
'Frances' subscribed, and that the only name;
She "pitied much her parents, spoke of fate,
"And begg'd them to forget her, not to hate;
"Said she had with her all the world could give,
"And only pray'd that they in peace should live,—
"That which is done, is that we're born to do,
"This she was taught, and she believed it true;

" True, that she lived in pleasure and delight,
" But often dream'd and saw the farm by night;
" The boarded room that she had kept so neat,
" And all her roses in the window-seat;
" The pear-tree shade, the jasmine's lovely gloom,
" With its long twigs that blossom'd in the room;
" But she was happy, and the tears that fell
" As she was writing had no grief to tell;
" We weep when we are glad, we sigh when we are well."

A bill inclosed, that they beheld with pain
And indignation, they return'd again;
There was no mention made of William's name,
Check'd as she was by pity, love, and shame.

William, who wrought for bread, and never sought
More than the day demanded when he wrought,
Was to a sister call'd, of all his race
The last, and dying in a distant place;
In tender terror he approach'd her bed,
Beheld her sick, and buried her when dead:
He was her heir, and what she left was more
Than he required, who was content before.

With their minds' sufferings, age, and growing pain,
That ancient couple could not long remain,
Nor long remain'd; and in their dying groan
The suffering youth perceived himself alone;
For of his health or sickness, peace or care,
He knew not one in all the world to share;
Now every scene would sad reflections give,
And most his home, and there he could not live;
There every walk would now distressing prove,
And of his loss remind him, and his love.

With the small portion by his sister left
He roved about as one of peace bereft,
And by the body's movements hoped to find
A kind of wearied stillness in the mind,
And sooner bring it to a sleepy state,
As rocking infants will their pains abate.

Thus careless, lost, unheeding where he went,
Nine weary years the wandering lover spent.

His sole employment, all that could amuse,
Was his companions on the road to choose;
With such he travell'd through the passing day,
Friends of the hour, and walkers by the way;

And from the sick, the poor, the halt, the blind,
He learn'd the sorrows of his suffering kind.

He learn'd of many how unjust their fate,
For their connexions dwelt in better state;
They had relations famous, great or rich,
Learned or wise, they never scrupled which;
But while they cursed these kindred churls, would try
To build their fame, and for their glory lie.

Others delighted in misfortunes strange,
The sports of fortune in her love for change.

Some spoke of wonders they before had seen,
When on their travels they had wandering been;
How they had sail'd the world about, and found
The sailing plain, although the world was round;
How they beheld for months th' unsetting sun,
What deeds they saw! what they themselves had done!—
What leaps at Rhodes!—what glory then they won!

There were who spoke in terms of high disdain
Of their contending against power in vain,
Suffering from tyranny of law long borne,
And life's best spirits in contentions worn:

Happy in this, th' oppressors soon will die,
Each with the vex'd and suffering man to lie—
And thus consoled exclaim, ' And is not sorrow dry?'

But vice offended: when he met with those
Who could a deed of violence propose,
And cry, " Should they what we desire possess?
" Should they deprive us, and their laws oppress?"
William would answer, " Ours is not redress:"—
" Would you oppression then for ever feel?"
" 'Tis not my choice; but yet I must not steal:"—
" So, first they cheat us, and then make their laws
" To guard their treasures and to back their cause:
" What call you then, my friend, the rights of man?"—
" To get his bread," said William, " if he can;
" And if he cannot, he must then depend
" Upon a Being he may make his friend:"—
" Make!" they replied; and conference had end.

But female vagrants would at times express
A new-born pleasure at the mild address;
His modest wish, clothed in accent meek,
That they would comfort in religion seek.

"I am a sinful being!" William cried;
"Then, what am I?" the conscious heart replied:
And oft-times ponder'd in a pensive way,
"He is not happy, yet he loves to pray."

But some would freely on his thoughts intrude,
And thrust themselves 'twixt him and solitude:
They would his faith and of its strength demand,
And all his soul's prime motions understand:
How! they would say, such wo and such belief,
Such trust in heaven, and yet on earth such grief!
Thou art almost, my friend,—thou art not all,
Thou hast not yet the self-destroying call;
Thou hast a carnal wish, perhaps a will
Not yet subdued,—the root is growing still:
There is the strong man yet that keeps his own,
Who by a stronger must be overthrown;
There is the burden that must yet be gone,
And then the pilgrim may go singing on.

William to this would seriously incline,
And to their comforts would his heart resign;
It soothed, it raised him,—he began to feel
Th' enlivening warmth of methodistic zeal;

He learn'd to know the brethren by their looks—
He sought their meetings, he perused their books;
But yet was not within the pale and yoke,
And as a novice of experience spoke;
But felt the comfort, and began to pray
For such companions on the king's highway.

William had now across the kingdom sped,
To th' Eastern ocean from St. David's head;
And wandering late, with various thoughts oppress'd,
'Twas midnight ere he reach'd his place of rest,—
A village inn, that one way-faring friend
Could from experience safely recommend,
Where the kind hostess would be more intent
On what he needed than on what he spent;
Her husband, once a heathen, she subdued,
And with religious fear his mind imbued;
Though his conviction came too late to save
An erring creature from an early grave.

Since that event, the cheerful widow grew
In size and substance,—her the brethren knew—
And many friends were hers, and lovers not a few;
But either love no more could warm her heart,
Or no man came who could the warmth impart.

William drew near, and saw the comely look
Of the good lady, bending o'er her book;
Hymns it appear'd,—for now a pleasing sound
Seem'd as a welcome in his wanderings found:
He enter'd softly, not as they who think
That they may act the ruffian if they drink,
And who conceive, that for their paltry pence
They may with rules of decency dispense;
Far unlike these was William,—he was kind,
Exacting nothing, and to all resign'd.

He saw the hostess reading,—and their eyes
Met in good will, and something like surprise:
It was not beauty William saw, but more,
Something like that which he had loved before—
Something that brought his Fanny to his view,
In the dear time when she was good and true;
And his, it seem'd, were features that were seen
With some emotion—she was not serene:
And both were moved to ask what looks like those could mean.
At first she colour'd to the deepest red,
That hurried off, till all the rose was fled;
She call'd a servant, whom she sent to rest,
Then made excuse to her attentive guest;

She own'd the thoughts confused,—'twas very true,
He brought a dear departed friend in view:
Then, as he listen'd, bade him welcome there
With livelier looks and more engaging air,
And stirr'd the fire of ling, and brush'd the wicker chair,
Waiting his order with the cheerful look,
That proved how pleasant were the pains she took.

He was refresh'd——They spake on various themes—
Our early pleasures, Reason's first-drawn schemes,
Youth's strong illusions, Love's delirious dreams:
Then from her book he would presume to ask
A song of praise, and she perform'd the task:
The clock struck twelve—He started—'Must I go?'
His looks spoke plainly, and the lady's, 'No:'
So down he sat,—and when the clock struck one
There was no start, no effort to be gone:
Nor stay'd discourse——
"And so your loves were cross'd,
"And the loved object to your wishes lost?
"But was she faithless, or were you to blame?
"I wish I knew her—Will you tell her name?"

"Excuse me—that would hurt her if alive;
"And, if no more, why should her fault survive?"

" But love you still?"—
" Alas! I feel I do,
" When I behold her very looks in you!"

" Yet, if the frail one's name must not be known,
" My friendly guest may trust me with his own."

This done, the lady paused, and then replied—
" It grieves me much to see your spirit tried;—
" But she was like me,—how I came to know
" The lamb that stray'd I will hereafter show;—
" We were indeed as sisters——Should I state
" Her quiet end, you would no longer hate:
" I see your heart,—and I shall quickly prove,
" Though she deserved not, yet she prized your love:
" Long as she breathed was heard her William's name—
" And such affection half absolves her shame.

" Weep not, but hear me, how I came to know
" Thee and thy Frances—this to heaven I owe;
" And thou shalt view the pledge, the very ring,
" The birth-day token—well you know the thing;
" ' This,' if I ever—thus I was to speak,
" As she had spoken—but I see you weak:

" She was not worthy——"

" O! you cannot tell

" By what accursed means my Fanny fell!

" What bane, compulsion, threats—for she was pure;

" But from such toils what being is secure?

" Force, not persuasion, robb'd me——"

" You are right;

" So has she told me, in her Maker's sight:

" She loved not vice——"

" O! no,—her heart approved

" All that her God commanded to be loved;

" And she is gone——"

" Consider! death alone

" Could for the errors of her life atone."

" Speak not of them; I would she knew how dear

" I hold her yet!—But dost thou give the tear

" To my loved Frances?—No! I cannot part

" With one who has her face, who has her heart;

" With looks so pleasing, when I thee behold,

" She lives—that bosom is no longer cold—

" Then tell me—Art thou not—in pity speak—

" One whom I sought, while living meant to seek—

" Art thou my Fanny?—Let me not offend—

" Be something to me—be a sufferer's friend—

" Be more—be all!——The precious truth confess—
" Art thou not Frances?——
" O, my William! yes!
" But spare me, spare thyself, and suffer less:
" In my best days, the spring-time of my life,
" I was not worthy to be William's wife;
" A widow now—not poor, indeed—not cast
" In outer darkness—sorrowing for the past,
" And for the future hoping—but no more:
" Let me the pledges of thy love restore,
" And give the ring thou gavest—let it be
" A token still of my regard for thee,—
" But only that,—and to a worthier now
" Consign the gift."——
" The only worthy thou!"
Replied the lover; and what more express'd
May be omitted—here our tale shall rest.

This pair, our host and hostess of the Fleece,
Command some wealth, and smile at its increase;
Saving and civil, cautious and discreet,
All sects and parties in their mansion meet;
There from their chapels teachers go to share
The creature-comforts,—mockery grins not there;

There meet the wardens at their annual feast,
With annual pun—‘ the parish must be fleeced;’
There traders find a parlour cleanly swept
For their reception, and in order kept;
And there the sons of labour, poor, but free,
Sit and enjoy their hour of liberty.

So live the pair,—and life's disasters seem
In their unruffled calm a troubled dream;
In comfort runs the remnant of their life—
He the fond husband, she the faithful wife.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XX.

THE CATHEDRAL-WALK.

George in his hypochondriac State—A Family Mansion now a Farm-house—The Company there—Their Conversation—Subjects afforded by the Pictures—Doubts if Spirits can appear—Arguments—Facts—The Relation of an old Lady—Her Walks in a Cathedral—Appearance there.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XX.

THE CATHEDRAL-WALK.

In their discourse again the Brothers dwelt
On early subjects—what they once had felt,
Once thought of things mysterious;—themes that all
With some degree of reverence recall.
George then reverted to the days of old,
When his heart fainted, and his hope was cold;
When by the power of fancy he was sway'd,
And every impulse of the mind obey'd.

" Then, my dear Richard," said the 'Squire, " my case
" Was call'd consumptive—I must seek a place
" And soil salubrious, thither must repair,
" And live on asses' milk and milder air.

" My uncle bought a farm, and on the land
" The fine old mansion yet was left to stand,
" Not in this state, but old and much decay'd;
" Of this a part was habitable made;
" The rest—who doubts?—was by the spirits seized,
" Ghosts of all kinds, who used it as they pleased.

" The worthy farmer tenant yet remain'd,
" Of good report—he had a fortune gain'd;
" And his three daughters at their school acquired
" The air and manner that their swains admired;
" The mother-gossip and these daughters three
" Talk'd of genteel and social company,
" And while the days were fine, and walks were clean,
" A fresh assemblage day by day were seen.

" There were the curate's gentle maids, and some
" From all the neighbouring villages would come;
" There, as I stole the yew-tree shades among,
" I saw the parties walking, old and young,
" Where I was nothing—if perceived, they said,
" ' The man is harmless, be not you afraid;
" ' A poor young creature, who, they say, is cross'd
" ' In love, and has in part his senses lost;

" ' His health for certain, and he comes to spend
" ' His time with us; we hope our air will mend
" ' A frame so weaken'd, for the learned tribe
" ' A change of air for stubborn ills prescribe;
" ' And doing nothing often has prevail'd
" ' When ten physicians have prescribed and fail'd;
" ' Not that for air or change there 's much to say,
" ' But nature then has time to take her way;
" ' And so we hope our village will restore
" ' This man to health that he possess'd before.
" ' He loves the garden avenues, the gloom
" ' Of the old chambers, of the tap'stried room,
" ' And we no notice take, we let him go and come.'

" So spake a gay young damsel; but she knew
" Not all the truth,—in part her tale was true.
" Much it amused me in the place to be
" This harmless cypher, seeming not to see,
" Yet seeing all,—unnoticed to appear,
" Yet noting all; and not disposed to hear,
" But to go forth,—break in on no one's plan,
" And hear them speak of the forsaken man.

" In scenes like these, a mansion so decay'd,
" With blighted trees in hoary moss array'd,

" And ivy'd walls around, for many an hour
" I walk'd alone, and felt their witching power;
" So others felt;—the young of either sex
" Would in these walks their timid minds perplex
" By meeting terrors, and the old appear'd,
" Their fears upbraiding, like the young who fear'd;
" Among them all some sad discourse at night
" Was sure to breed a terrified delight:
" Some luckless one of the attentive dames
" Had figures seen like those within the frames,
" Figures of lords who once the land possess'd,
" And who could never in their coffins rest;
" Unhappy spirits! who could not abide
" The loss of all their consequence and pride,
" 'Twas death in all his power, their very names had died.

" These tales of terror views terrific bred,
" And sent the hearers trembling to their bed."

In an autumnal evening, cool and still,
The sun just dropp'd beneath a distant hill,
The children gazing on the quiet scene,
Then rose in glory Night's majestic queen;

And pleasant was the chequer'd light and shade
Her golden beams and maple shadows made;
An ancient tree that in the garden grew,
And that fair picture on the gravel threw.

Then all was silent, save the sounds that make
Silence more awful, while they faintly break;
The frighten'd bat's low shriek, the beetle's hum,
With nameless sounds we know not whence they come

Such was the evening; and that ancient seat
The scene where then some neighbours chanced to meet;
Up to the door led broken steps of stone,
Whose dewy surface in the moonlight shone;
On vegetation, that with progress slow
Where man forbears to fix his foot, will grow;
The window's depth and dust repell'd the ray
Of the moon's light and of the setting day;
Pictures there were, and each display'd a face
And form that gave their sadness to the place;
The frame and canvas show'd that worms unseen,
Save in their works, for years had working been;
A fire of brushwood on the irons laid
All the dull room in fitful views display'd,
And with its own wild light in fearful forms array'd.

In this old Hall, in this departing day,
Assembled friends and neighbours, grave and gay,
When one good lady at a picture threw
A glance that caused inquiry—" Tell us who?"

" That was a famous warrior; one, they said,
" That by a spirit was awhile obey'd;
" In all his dreadful battles he would say,
" ' Or win or lose, I shall escape to-day;'
" And though the shot as thick as hail came round,
" On no occasion he received a wound;
" He stood in safety, free from all alarm,
" Protected, heaven forgive him, by his charm:
" But he forgot the date, till came the hour
" When he no more had the protecting power;
" And then he bade his friends around farewell!
" ' I fall!' he cried, and in the instant fell.

" Behold those infants in the frame beneath!
" A witch offended wrought their early death;
" She form'd an image, made as wax to melt,
" And each the wasting of the figure felt;
" The hag confess'd it when she came to die,
" And no one living can the truth deny.

" But see a beauty in King William's days,
" With that long waist, and those enormous stays;
" She had three lovers, and no creature knew
" The one preferr'd, or the discarded two;
" None could the secret of her bosom see;
" Loving, poor maid, th' attention of the three,
" She kept such equal weight in either scale,
" 'Twas hard to say who would at last prevail;
" Thus you may think in either heart arose
" A jealous anger, and the men were foes;
" Each with himself concluded, two aside,
" The third may make the lovely maid his bride:
" This caused their fate—It was on Thursday night
" The deed was done, and bloody was the fight;
" Just as she went, poor thoughtless girl! to prayers,
" Ran wild the maid with horror up the stairs;
" Pale as a ghost, but not a word she said,
" And then the lady utter'd, ' Coates is dead!'

" Then the poor damsel found her voice and cried,
" ' Ran through the body, and that instant died!
" ' But he pronounced your name, and so was satisfied.'
" A second fell, and he who did survive
" Was kept by skill and sovereign drugs alive;

" ' O! would she see me!' he was heard to say,
" ' No! I'll torment him to his dying day!'
" The maid exclaim'd, and every Thursday night
" Her spirit came his wretched soul to fright;
" Once as she came he cried aloud ' Forgive!'
" ' Never!' she answer'd, ' never while you live,
" ' Nor when you die, as long as time endures;
" ' You have my torment been, and I'll be yours!'
" That is the lady, and the man confess'd
" Her vengeful spirit would not let him rest."

" But are there ghosts?" exclaim'd a timid maid;
" My father tells me not to be afraid;
" He cries when buried we are safe enough,
" And calls such stories execrable stuff."

" Your father, child," the former lady cried,
" Has learning much, but he has too much pride;
" It is impossible for him to tell
" What things in nature are impossible,
" Or out of nature, or to prove to whom
" Or for what purposes a ghost may come;
" It may not be intelligence to bring,
" But to keep up a notion of the thing;

" And though from one such fact there may arise
" An hundred wild improbabilities,
" Yet had there never been the truth, I say,
" The very lies themselves had died away."

" True," said a friend; " Heaven doubtless may dispense
" A kind of dark and clouded evidence;
" God has not promised that he will not send
" A spirit freed to either foe or friend;
" He may such proof, and only such bestow,
" Though we the certain truth can never know;
" And therefore though such floating stories bring
" No strong or certain vouchers of the thing,
" Still would I not, presuming, pass my word
" That all such tales were groundless and absurd."

" But you will grant," said one who sate beside,
" That all appear so when with judgment tried?"

" For that concession, madam, you may call,
" When we have sate in judgment upon all."

An ancient lady, who with pensive smile
Had heard the stories, and been mute the while,

Now said, " Our prudence had been better shown
" By leaving uncontested things unknown;
" Yet if our children must such stories hear,
" Let us provide some antidotes to fear;
" For all such errors in the minds of youth,
" In any mind, the only cure is truth;
" And truths collected may in time decide
" Upon such facts, or prove, at least, a guide:
" If then permitted I will fairly state
" One fact, nor doubt the story I relate;
" I for your perfect acquiescence call,
" 'Tis of myself I tell."——" O! tell us all!"
Said every being there: then silent was the Hall.

" Early in life, beneath my parent's roof,
" Of man's true honour I had noble proof;
" A generous lover who was worthy found,
" Where half his sex are hollow and unsound.

" My father fail'd in trade, and sorrowing died,
" When all our loss a generous youth supplied;
" And soon the time drew on when he could say,
" ' O! fix the happy, fix the early day!'
" Nor meant I to oppose his wishes, or delay:

" But then came fever, slight at first indeed,
" Then hastening on and threatening in its speed;
" It mock'd the powers of medicine; day by day
" I saw those helpers sadly walk away;
" So came the hand-like cloud, and with such power
" And with such speed, that brought the mighty shower.

" Him nursed I dying, and we freely spoke
" Of what might follow the expected stroke;
" We talk'd of spirits, of their unknown powers,
" And dared to dwell on what the fate of ours;
" But the dread promise, to appear again,
" Could it be done, I sought not to obtain;
" But yet we were presuming—' Could it be,'
" He said, ' O Emma! I would come to thee!'

" At his last hour his reason, late astray,
" Again return'd t' illuminate his way.

" In the last night my mother long had kept
" Unwearied watch, and now reclined and slept;
" The nurse was dreaming in a distant chair,
" And I had knelt to soothe him with a prayer;
" When, with a look of that peculiar kind
" That gives its purpose to the fellow mind,

" His manner spoke—' Confide—be not afraid—
" ' I shall remember,'—this was all convey'd,—
" ' I know not what awaits departed man,
" ' But this believe—I meet thee if I can.'

" I wish'd to die,—and grief, they say, will kill,
" But you perceive 'tis slowly if it will;
" That I was wretched you may well believe—
" I judged it right, and was resolved to grieve:
" I lost my mother when there lived not one,
" Man, woman, child, whom I would seek or shun.

" The Dean, my uncle, with congenial gloom,
" Said, ' Will you share a melancholy home?'
" For he bewail'd a wife, as I deplored
" My fate, and bliss that could not be restored.

" In his cathedral's gloom I pass'd my time,
" Much in devotion, much in thought sublime;
" There oft I paced the aisles, and watch'd the glow
" Of the sun setting on the stones below,
" And saw the failing light, that strove to pass
" Through the dim coating of the storied glass,
" Nor fell within, but till the day was gone
" The red faint fire upon the window shone.

" I took the key, and oft-times chose to stay
" Till all was vanish'd of the tedious day,
" Till I perceived no light, nor heard a sound,
" That gave me notice of a world around.

" Then had I grief's proud thoughts, and said, in tone
" Of exultation, ' World, I am alone!
" ' I care not for thee, thou art vile and base,
" ' And I shall leave thee for a nobler place.'

" So I the world abused,—in fact, to me
" Urbane and civil as a world could be:
" Nor should romantic grievers thus complain,
" Although but little in the world they gain,
" But let them think if they have nothing done
" To make this odious world so sad a one,
" Or what their worth and virtue that should make
" This graceless world so pleasant for their sake.

" But to my tale:—Behold me as I tread
" The silent mansions of the favour'd dead,
" Who sleep in vaulted chambers, till their clay
" In quiet dissolution melts away
" In this their bodies' home—The spirits, where are they?

" ' And where *his* spirit?—Doors and walls impede
" ' The embodied spirit, not the spirit freed:'
" And, saying this, I at the altar knelt,
" And painful joys and rapturous anguish felt;
" Till strong, bold hopes possess'd me, and I cried,
" ' Even at this instant is he at my side;'
" Yes, now, dear spirit! art thou by to prove
" That mine is lasting, mine the loyal love!

" Thus have I thought, returning to the Dean,
" As one who had some glorious vision seen:
" He ask'd no question, but would sit and weep,
" And cry, in doleful tone, ' I cannot sleep!'

" In dreams the chosen of my heart I view'd,
" And thus th' impression day by day renew'd;
" I saw him always, always loved to see,
" For when alone he was my company:
" In company with him alone I seem'd,
" And, if not dreaming, was as one who dream'd.

" Thus, robb'd of sleep, I found, when evening came,
" A pleasing torpor steal upon my frame;
" But still the habit drew my languid feet
" To the loved darkness of the favourite seat;

" And there, by silence and by sadness press'd,
" I felt a world my own, and was at rest.

" One night, when urged with more than usual zeal,
" And feeling all that such enthusiasts feel,
" I paced the altar by, the pillars round,
" And knew no terror in the sacred ground;
" For mine were thoughts that banish'd all such fear,—
" I wish'd, I long'd to have that form appear;
" And, as I paced the sacred aisles, I cried,
" ' Let not thy Emma's spirit be denied
" ' The sight of thine; or, if I may not see,
" ' Still by some token let her certain be!'

" At length the anxious thoughts my strength subdued,
" And sleep o'erpower'd me in my solitude;
" Then was I dreaming of unearthly race,
" The glorious inmates of a blessed place;
" Where lofty minds celestial views explore,
" Heaven's bliss enjoy, and heaven's great King adore;
" Him there I sought whom I had loved so well—
" For sure he dwelt where happy spirits dwell!

" While thus engaged, I started at a sound,
" Of what I knew not, but I look'd around;

" For I was borne on visionary wings,
" And felt no dread of sublunary things;
" But rising, walk'd—A distant window threw
" A weak, soft light, that help'd me in my view;
" Something with anxious heart I hoped to see,
" And pray'd, ' O! God of all things, let it be!
" ' For all are thine, were made by thee, and thou
" ' Canst both the meeting and the means allow;
" ' Thou canst make clear my sight, or thou canst make
" ' More gross the form that his loved mind shall take,
" ' Canst clothe his spirit for my fleshly sight,
" ' Or make my earthly sense more pure and bright.'

" So was I speaking, when without a sound
" There was a movement in the sacred ground:
" I saw a figure rising, but could trace
" No certain features, no peculiar face;
" But I prepared my mind that form to view,
" Nor felt a doubt,—he promised, and was true!
" I should embrace his angel, and my clay,
" And what was mortal in me, melt away.

" O! that ecstatic horror in my frame,
" That o'er me thus, a favour'd mortal, came!

" Bless'd beyond mortals,—and the body now
" I judged would perish, though I knew not how;
" The gracious power around me could translate
" And make me pass to that immortal state:
" Thus shall I pay the debt that must be paid,
" And dying live, nor be by death delay'd;
" And when so changed, I should with joy sustain
" The heavenly converse, and with him remain.

" I saw the distant shade, and went with awe,
" But not with terror, to the form I saw;
" Yet slowly went, for he I did believe
" Would meet, and soul to soul his friend receive;
" So on I drew, concluding in my mind,
" I cannot judge what laws may spirits bind;
" Though I dissolve, and mingle with the blest,
" I am a new and uninstructed guest,
" And ere my love can speak, he should be first address'd.

" Thus I began to speak,—my new-born pride,
" My love, and daring hope, the words supplied.

" ' Dear, happy shade! companion of the good,
" ' The just, the pure, do I on thee intrude?

" ' Art thou not come my spirit to improve,
" ' To form, instruct, and fit me for thy love,
" ' And, as in love we parted, to restore
" ' The blessing lost, and then to part no more?
" ' Let me with thee in thy pure essence dwell,
" ' Nor go to bid them of my house farewell,
" ' But thine be ever!'——How shall I relate
" Th' event that finish'd this ecstatic state?
" Yet let me try.—It turn'd, and I beheld
" An hideous form, that hope and zeal expell'd:
" In a dim light the horrid shape appear'd,
" That wisdom would have fled, and courage fear'd,
" Pale, and yet bloated, with distorted eyes
" Distant and deep, a mouth of monstrous size,
" That would in day's broad glare a simple maid surprise:
" He heard my words, and cried, with savage shout,
" ' Bah!—bother!—blarney!—What is this about?'

" Love, lover, longing, in an instant fled,—
" Now I had vice and impudence to dread;
" And all my high-wrought fancies died away
" To woman's trouble, terror, and dismay.

" ' What,' said the wretch, ' what is it you would have?
" ' Would'st hang a man for peeping in a grave?

" ' Search me yourself, and try if you can feel
" ' Aught I have taken,—there was nought to steal:
" ' 'Twas told they buried with the corpse enough
" ' To pay the hazard,—I have made the proof,
" ' Nor gain'd a tester—What I tell is true;
" ' But I 'm no fool, to be betray'd by you,—
" ' I 'll hazard nothing, curse me if I do!'

" The light increased, and plainly now appear'd
" A knavish fool whom I had often fear'd,
" But hid the dread; and I resolved at least
" Not to expose it to the powerful beast.

" ' Come, John,' I said, suppressing fear and doubt,
" ' Walk on before, and let a lady out!'—
" ' Lady!' the wretch replied, with savage grin,
" ' Apply to him that let the lady in:
" ' What! you would go, I take it, to the Dean,
" ' And tell him what your ladyship has seen.'

" When thus the fool exposed the knave, I saw
" The means of holding such a mind in awe,
" And gain my safety by his dread of law.

" ' Alas!' I cried, ' I fear the Dean like you,
" ' For I transgress, and am in trouble too:
" ' If it be known that we are here, as sure
" ' As here we are we must the law endure:
" ' Each other's counsel therefore let us keep,
" ' And each steal homeward to our beds and sleep.'

" ' Steal!' said the ruffian's conscience—' Well, agreed;
" ' Steal on, and let us to the door proceed:'—
" Yet, ere he moved, he stood awhile, and took
" Of my poor form a most alarming look;
" ' But, hark!' I cried, and he to move began,—
" Escape alone engaged the dreadful man:
" With eager hand I oped the ponderous door—
" The wretch rush'd by me, and was heard no more.

" So I escaped,—and when my dreams came on,
" I check'd the madness by the thoughts of John:
" Yet say I not what can or cannot be,
" But give the story of my ghost and me."

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XXI.

SMUGGLERS AND POACHERS.

A Widow at the Hall—Inquiry of Richard—Relation of two Brothers—Their different Character—Disposition—Modes of thinking—James a Servant—Robert joins the Smugglers—Rachel at the Hall—James attached to her—Trade fails—Robert a Poacher—Is in Danger—How released—James and Rachel—Revenge excited—Association formed—Attack resolved—Preparation made for Resistance—A Night Adventure—Reflections.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XXI.

SMUGGLERS AND POACHERS.

THERE was a widow in the village known
To our good Squire, and he had favour shown
By frequent bounty—She as usual came,
And Richard saw the worn and weary frame,
Pale cheek, and eye subdued, of her whose mind
Was grateful still, and glad a friend to find,
Though to the world long since and all its hopes resign'd:
Her easy form, in rustic neatness clad,
Was pleasing still! but she for ever sad.

"Deep is her grief?" said Richard—"Truly deep,
"And very still, and therefore seems to sleep;
"To borrow simile, to paint her woes,
"Theirs, like the river's motion, seems repose,

" Making no petty murmuring,—settled, slow,
" They never waste, they never overflow.
" Rachel is one of those—for there are some
" Who look for nothing in their days to come,
" No good nor evil, neither hope nor fear,
" Nothing remains or cheerful or severe;
" One day is like the past, the year's sweet prime
" Like the sad fall,—for Rachel heeds not time:
" Nothing remains to agitate her breast,
" Spent is the tempest, and the sky at rest;
" But while it raged her peace its ruin met,
" And now the sun is on her prospects set;—
" Leave her, and let us her distress explore,
" She heeds it not—she has been left before."

There were two lads call'd Shelley hither brought,
But whence we know not—it was never sought;
Their wandering mother left them, left her name,
And the boys throve and valiant men became:
Handsome, of more than common size, and tall,
And no one's kindred, seem'd beloved of all;
All seem'd alliance by their deeds to prove,
And loved the youths who could not claim their love.

One was call'd James, the more sedate and grave,
The other Robert—names their neighbours gave;
They both were brave, but Robert loved to run
And meet his danger—James would rather shun
The dangerous trial, but whenever tried
He all his spirit to the act applied.

Robert would aid on any man bestow,
James would his man and the occasion know;
For that was quick and prompt—this temperate and slow.

Robert would all things he desired pursue,
James would consider what was best to do;
All spoke of Robert as a man they loved,
And most of James as valued and approved.

Both had some learning: Robert his acquired
By quicker parts, and was by praise inspired;
James, as he was in his acquirements slow,
Would learn the worth of what he tried to know.

In fact, this youth was generous—that was just;
The one you loved, the other you would trust:
Yet him you loved you would for truth approve,
And him you trusted you would likewise love.

Such were the brothers—James had found his way
To Nether Hall, and there inclined to stay;
He could himself command, and therefore could obey:
He with the keeper took his daily round,
A rival grew, and some unkindness found;
But his superior farm'd! the place was void,
And James guns, dogs, and dignity enjoy'd.

Robert had scorn of service; he would be
A slave to no man—happy were the free,
And only they;—by such opinions led,
Robert to sundry kinds of trade was bred;
Nor let us wonder if he sometimes made
An active partner in a lawless trade;
Fond of adventure, wanton as the wave,
He loved the danger and the law to brave;
But these were chance-adventures, known to few,—
Not that the hero cared what people knew.

The brothers met not often—When they met
James talk'd of honest gains and scorn of debt,
Of virtuous labour, of a sober life,
And what with credit would support a wife.

But Robert answer'd—" How can men advise
" Who to a master let their tongue and eyes?
" Whose words are not their own? whose foot and hand
" Run at a nod, or act upon command?
" Who cannot eat or drink, discourse or play,
" Without requesting others that they may.

" Debt you would shun; but what advice to give
" Who owe your service every hour you live!
" Let a bell sound, and from your friends you run,
" Although the darling of your heart were one;
" But if the bondage fits you, I resign
" You to your lot—I am content with mine!"

Thus would the lads their sentiments express,
And part in earnest, part in playfulness;
Till Love, controller of all hearts and eyes,
Breaker of bonds, of friendship's holy ties,
Awakener of new wills and slumbering sympathies,
Began his reign,—till Rachel, meek-eyed maid,
That form, those cheeks, that faultless face display'd,
That child of gracious nature, ever neat
And never fine; a flowret simply sweet,
Seeming at least unconscious she was fair;
Meek in her spirit, timid in her air,

And shrinking from his glance if one presumed
To come too near the beauty as it bloom'd.

Robert beheld her in her father's cot
Day after day, and blest his happy lot;
He look'd indeed, but he could not offend
By gentle looks—he was her father's friend:
She was accustom'd to that tender look,
And frankly gave the hand he fondly took;
She loved his stories, pleased she heard him play,
Pensive herself, she loved to see him gay,
And if they loved not yet, they were in Love's highway.

But Rachel now to womanhood was grown,
And would no more her faith and fondness own;
She called her latent prudence to her aid,
And grew observant, cautious, and afraid;
She heard relations of her lover's guile,
And could believe the danger of his smile:
With art insidious rival damsels strove
To show how false his speech, how feign'd his love;
And though her heart another story told,
Her speech grew cautious, and her manner cold.

Rachel had village fame, was fair and tall,
And gain'd a place of credit at the Hall;
Where James beheld her seated in that place,
With a child's meekness, and an angel's face;
Her temper soft, her spirit firm, her words
Simple and few as simple truth affords.

James could but love her,—he at church had seen
The tall, fair maid, had met her on the green,
Admiring always, nor surprised to find
Her figure often present to his mind;
But now he saw her daily, and the sight
Gave him new pleasure and increased delight.

But James, still prudent and reserved, though sure
The love he felt was love that would endure,
Would wait awhile, observing what was fit,
And meet, and right, nor would himself commit:
Then was he flatter'd,—James in time became
Rich, both as slayer of the Baron's game,
And as protector,—not a female dwelt
In that demesne who had not feign'd or felt
Regard for James; and he from all had praise
Enough a young man's vanity to raise;

With all these pleasures he of course must part
When Rachel reign'd sole empress of his heart.

Robert was now deprived of that delight
He once experienced in his mistress' sight;
For, though he now his frequent visits paid,
He saw but little of the cautious maid;
The simple common pleasures that he took
Grew dull, and he the wonted haunts forsook;
His flute and song he left, his book and pen,
And sought the meetings of adventurous men;
There was a love-born sadness in his breast,
That wanted stimulus to bring on rest;
These simple pleasures were no more of use,
And danger only could repose produce;
He join'd th' associates in their lawless trade,
And was at length of their profession made.

He saw connected with th' adventurous crew
Those whom he judged were sober men and true;
He found that some, who should the trade prevent,
Gave it by purchase their encouragement;
He found that contracts could be made with those
Who had their pay these dealers to oppose;

And the good ladies whom at church he saw
With looks devout, of reverence and awe,
Could change their feelings as they change their place,
And, whispering, deal for spicery and lace:
And thus the craft and avarice of these
Urged on the youth, and gave his conscience ease.

Him loved the maiden Rachel, fondly loved,
As many a sigh and tear in absence proved,
And many a fear for dangers that she knew,
And many a doubt what one so gay might do:
Of guilt she thought not,—she had often heard
They bought and sold, and nothing wrong appear'd;
Her father's maxim this: she understood
There was some ill,—but he, she knew, was good:
It was a traffic—but was done by night—
If wrong, how trade? why secrecy, if right?
But Robert's conscience, she believed, was pure—
And that he read his Bible she was sure.

James, better taught, in confidence declared
His grief for what his guilty brother dared:
He sigh'd to think how near he was akin
To one reduced by godless men to sin;

Who, being always of the law in dread,
To other crimes were by the danger led—
And crimes with like excuse——The smuggler cries,
" What guilt is his who pays for what he buys?"
The poacher questions, with perverted mind,
" Were not the gifts of heaven for all design'd?"
This cries, " I sin not—take not till I pay;"—
That, " My own hand brought down my proper prey:"—
And while to such fond arguments they cling,
How fear they God? how honour they the king?
Such men associate, and each other aid,
Till all are guilty, rash, and desperate made;
Till to some lawless deed the wretches fly,
And in the act, or for the acting, die.

The maid was frighten'd,—but, if this was true,
Robert for certain no such danger knew,
He always pray'd ere he a trip began,
And was too happy for a wicked man:
How could a creature, who was always gay,
So kind to all men, so disposed to pray,
How could he give his heart to such an evil way?
Yet she had fears,—for she could not believe
That James could lie, or purpose to deceive;

But still she found, though not without respect
For one so good, she must the man reject;
For, simple though she was, full well she knew
What this strong friendship led him to pursue;
And, let the man be honest as the light,
Love warps the mind a little from the right;
And she proposed, against the trying day,
What in the trial she should think and say.

And now, their love avow'd, in both arose
Fear and disdain—the orphan pair were foes.

Robert, more generous of the two, avow'd
His scorn, defiance, and contempt aloud.

James talk'd of pity in a softer tone,
To Rachel speaking, and with her alone:
He knew full well, he said, to what must come
His wretched brother, what would be his doom:
Thus he her bosom fenced with dread about;
But love he could not with his skill drive out.
Still he effected something,—and that skill
Made the love wretched, though it could not kill;

And Robert fail'd, though much he tried, to prove
He had no guilt—She granted he had love.

Thus they proceeded, till a winter came,
When the stern keeper told of stolen game:
Throughout the woods the poaching dogs had been,
And from him nothing should the robbers screen,
From him and law,—he would all hazards run,
Nor spare a poacher, were his brother one—
Love, favour, interest, tie of blood should fail,
Till vengeance bore him bleeding to the jail.

Poor Rachel shudder'd,—smuggling she could name
Without confusion, for she felt not shame;
But poachers were her terror, and a wood
Which they frequented had been mark'd by blood;
And though she thought her Robert was secure
In better thoughts, yet could she not be sure.

James now was urgent,—it would break his heart
With hope, with her, and with such views to part,
When one so wicked would her hand possess,
And he a brother!—that was his distress,
And must be hers——She heard him, and she sigh'd,
Looking in doubt,—but nothing she replied.

There was a generous feeling in her mind,
That told her this was neither good nor kind:
James caused her terror, but he did no more—
Her love was now as it had been before.

Their traffic fail'd,—and the adventurous crew
No more their profitless attempts renew:
Dig they will not, and beg they might in vain—
Had they not pride, and what can then remain?

Now was the game destroy'd, and not an hare
Escaped at least the danger of the snare;
Woods of their feather'd beauty were bereft,
The beauteous victims of the silent theft;
The well-known shops received a large supply,
That they who could not kill at least might buy.

James was enraged, enraged his lord, and both
Confirm'd their threatening with a vengeful oath:
Fresh aid was sought,—and nightly on the lands
Walk'd on their watch the strong determined bands:
Pardon was offer'd, and a promised pay
To him who would the desperate gang betray.

Nor fail'd the measure,—on a certain night
A few were seized—the rest escaped by flight;
Yet they resisted boldly ere they fled,
And blows were dealt around, and blood was shed;
Two groaning helpers on the earth were laid,
When more arrived the lawful cause to aid:
Then four determined men were seized and bound,
And Robert in this desperate number found:
In prison fetter'd, he deplored his fate,
And cursed the folly he perceived too late.

James was a favourite with his lord,—the zeal
He show'd was such as masters ever feel:
If he for vengeance on a culprit cried,
Or if for mercy, still his lord complied:
And now, 'twas said, he will for mercy plead,
For his own brother's was the guilty deed:
True, the hurt man is in a mending way,
But must be crippled to his dying day.

Now James had vow'd the law should take its course,
He would not stay it, if he did not force;
He could his witness, if he pleased, withdraw,
Or he could arm with certain death the law:

This he attested to the maid, and true,
If this he could not, yet he much could do.

How suffer'd then that maid,—no thought she had,
No view of days to come, that was not sad;
As sad as life with all its hopes resign'd,
As sad as ought but guilt can make mankind.

With bitter grief the pleasures she review'd
Of early hope, with innocence pursued,
When she began to love, and he was fond and good:
He now must die, she heard from every tongue—
Die, and so thoughtless! perish, and so young!
Brave, kind, and generous, tender, constant, true,
And he must die—then will I perish too!

A thousand acts in every age will prove
Women are valiant in a cause they love;
If fate the favour'd swain in danger place,
They heed not danger—perils they embrace;
They dare the world's contempt, they brave their name's
disgrace;
They on the ocean meet its wild alarms,
They search the dungeon with extended arms;

The utmost trial of their faith they prove,
And yield the lover to assert their love.

James knew his power—his feelings were not nice—
Mercy he sold, and she must pay the price:
If his good lord forbore to urge their fate,
And he the utmost of their guilt to state,
The felons might their forfeit lives redeem,
And in their country's cause regain esteem;
But never more that man, whom he had shame
To call his brother, must she see or name.

Rachel was meek, but she had firmness too,
And reason'd much on what she ought to do:
In Robert's place, she knew what she should choose—
But life was not the thing she fear'd to lose:
She knew that she could not their contract break,
Nor for her life a new engagement make;
But he was man, and guilty,—death so near
Might not to his as to her mind appear;
And he might wish, to spare that forfeit life,
The maid he loved might be his brother's wife,
Although that brother was his bitter foe,
And he must all the sweets of life forego.

This would she try,—intent on this alone,
She could assume a calm and settled tone:
She spake with firmness—" I will Robert see,
" Know what he wishes, and what I must be;"
For James had now discover'd to the maid
His inmost heart, and how he must be paid,
If he his lord would soften, and would hide
The facts that must the culprit's fate decide.
" Go not," he said,—for she her full intent
Proclaim'd——To go she purposed, and she went:
She took a guide, and went with purpose stern
The secret wishes of her friend to learn.

She saw him fetter'd, full of grief, alone,
Still as the dead, and he suppress'd a groan
At her appearance——Now she pray'd for strength;
And the sad couple could converse at length.

It was a scene that shook her to repeat,—
Life fought with love, both powerful, and both sweet.

" Wilt thou die, Robert, or preserve thy life?
" Shall I be thine own maid, or James's wife?"

" His wife!—No!—Never will I thee resign—
" No, Rachel, no!"——" Then am I ever thine:
" I know thee rash and guilty,—but to thee
" I pledged my vow, and thine will ever be:
" Yet think again,—the life that God has lent
" Is thine, but not to cast away,—Consent,
" If 'tis thy wish; for this I made my way
" To thy distress—Command, and I obey."

" Perhaps my brother may have gain'd thy heart!"—
" Then why this visit, if I wish'd to part?
" Was it, ah, man ungrateful! wise to make
" Effort like this, to hazard for thy sake
" A spotless reputation, and to be
" A suppliant to that stern man for thee?
" But I forgive,—thy spirit has been tried,
" And thou art weak, but still thou must decide.

" I ask'd thy brother, James, would'st thou command,
" Without the loving heart, the obedient hand?
" I ask thee, Robert, lover, canst thou part
" With this poor hand, when master of the heart?"
" He answer'd, ' Yes!'—I tarry thy reply,
" Resign'd with him to live, content with thee to die."

Assured of this, with spirits low and tame,
Here life so purchased—there a death of shame;
Death once his merriment, but now his dread,
And he with terror thought upon the dead:
" O! sure 'tis better to endure the care
" And pain of life, than go we know not where!—
" And is there not the dreaded hell for sin,
" Or is it only this I feel within?
" That, if it lasted, no man would sustain,
" But would by any change relieve the pain:
" Forgive me, love! it is a loathsome thing
" To live not thine; but still this dreaded sting
" Of death torments me—I to nature cling——
" Go, and be his—but love him not, be sure—
" Go, love him not,—and I will life endure:
" He, too, is mortal!"——Rachel deeply sigh'd,
But would no more converse: she had complied,
And was no longer free—she was his brother's bride.

" Farewell!" she said, with kindness, but not fond,
Feeling the pressure of the recent bond,
And put her tenderness apart to give
Advice to one who so desired to live:
She then departed, join'd the attending guide,
Reflected—wept—was sad—was satisfied.

James on her worth and virtue could depend,—
He listen'd gladly to her story's end:
Again he promised Robert's life to save,
And claim'd the hand that she in payment gave.

Robert, when death no longer was in view,
Scorn'd what was done, but could not this undo:
The day appointed for the trial near
He view'd with shame, and not unmix'd with fear,—
James might deceive him; and, if not, the schemes
Of men may fail——Can I depend on James?

He might; for now the grievous price was paid—
James to the altar led the victim maid,
And gave the trembling girl his faithful word
For Robert's safety, and so gave my lord.

But this, and all the promise hope could give,
Gilded not life,—it was not joy to live;
There was no smile in Rachel, nothing gay;
The hours pass'd off, but never danced away.

When drew the gloomy day for trial near
There came a note to Robert—" Banish fear!"

He knew whence safety came,—his terror fled,
But rage and vengeance fill'd his soul instead.

A stronger fear in his companions rose—
The day of trial on their hopes might close:
They had no brothers, none to intercede
For them, their friends suspected, and in need;
Scatter'd, they judged, and could unite no more,—
Not so, they then were at the prison door.

For some had met who sought the haunts they loved,
And were to pity and to vengeance moved:
Their fellows perish! and they see their fall,—
Why not attempt the steep but guardless wall?

Attempt was made, his part assign'd each man,
And they succeeded in the desperate plan;
In truth, a purposed mercy smooth'd their way,
But that they knew not—all triumphant they.
Safe in their well-known haunts, they all prepared
To plan anew, and show how much they dared.

With joy the troubled heart of Robert beat,
For life was his, and liberty was sweet;

He look'd around in freedom——in delight?
O! no—his Rachel was another's right!
" Right!—has he then preserved me in the day
" Of my distress?—He has the lovely pay!
" But I no freedom at the slaves request,
" The price I paid shall then be repossess'd!
" Alas! her virtue and the law prevent,
" Force cannot be, and she will not consent;
" But were that brother gone!—A brother? No!
" A circumventor!—and the wretch shall go!
" Yet not this hand—How shifts about my mind,
" Ungovern'd, guideless, drifting in the wind,
" And I am all a tempest, whirl'd around
" By dreadful thoughts, that fright me and confound;—
" I would I saw him on the earth laid low!
" I wish the fate, but must not give the blow!"

So thinks a man when thoughtful; he prefers
A life of peace till man his anger stirs,
Then all the efforts of his reason cease,
And he forgets how pleasant was that peace;
Till the wild passions what they seek obtain,
And then he sinks into his calm again.

Now met the lawless clan,—in secret met,
And down at their convivial board were set;
The plans in view to past adventures led,
And the past conflicts present anger bred;
They sigh'd for pleasures gone, they groan'd for heroes dead:
Their ancient stores were rifled,—strong desires
Awaked, and wine rekindled latent fires.

It was a night such bold desires to move,
Strong winds and wintry torrents fill'd the grove;
The crackling boughs that in the forest fell,
The cawing rooks, the cur's affrighten'd yell;
The scenes above the wood, the floods below,
Were mix'd, and none the single sound could know;
"Loud blow the blasts," they cried, "and call us as they blow."

In such a night—and then the heroes told
What had been done in better times of old;
How they had conquer'd all opposed to them,
By force in part, in part by stratagem;
And as the tales inflamed the fiery crew,
What had been done they then prepared to do;

" 'Tis a last night!" they said—the angry blast
And roaring floods seem'd answering " 'tis a last!"

James knew they met, for he had spies about,
Grave, sober men, whom none presumed to doubt;
For if suspected, they had soon been tried
Where fears are evidence, and doubts decide:
But these escaped——Now James companions took,
Sturdy and bold, with terror-stirring look;
He had before, by informations led,
Left the afflicted partner of his bed;
Awaked his men, and through plantations wide,
Deep woods, and trackless ling, had been their guide;
And then return'd to wake the pitying wife,
And hear her tender terrors for his life.

But in this night a sure informer came,
They were assembled who attack'd his game;
Who more than once had through the park made way,
And slain the dappled breed, or vow'd to slay;
The trembling spy had heard the solemn vow,
And need and vengeance both inspired them now.

The keeper early had retired to rest
For brief repose;—sad thoughts his mind possess'd;

In his short sleep he started from his bed,
And ask'd in fancy's terror "Is he dead?"

There was a call below, when James awoke,
Rose from his bed, and arms to aid him took,
Not all defensive!—there his helpers stood,
Arm'd like himself, and hastening to the wood.

"Why this?" he said, for Rachel pour'd her tears
Profuse, that spoke involuntary fears:
"Sleep, that so early thou for us may'st wake,
"And we our comforts in return may take;
"Sleep, and farewell!" he said, and took his way,
And the sad wife in neither could obey;
She slept not nor well fared, but restless dwelt
On her past life, and past afflictions felt;
The man she loved the brother and the foe
Of him she married!—It had wrought her woe;
Not that she loved, but pitied, and that now
Was, so she fear'd, infringement of her vow:
James too was civil, though she must confess
That his was not her kind of happiness;
That he would shoot the man who shot a hare
Was what her timid conscience could not bear;

But still she loved him—wonder'd where he stray'd
In this loud night! and if he were afraid.

More than one hour she thought, and dropping then
In sudden sleep, cried loudly " Spare him, men!
" And do no murder!"—then awaked she rose,
And thought no more of trying for repose.

'Twas past the dead of night, when every sound
That nature mingles might be heard around;
But none from man,—man's feeble voice was hush'd,
Where rivers swelling roar'd, and woods were crush'd;
Hurried by these, the wife could sit no more,
But must the terrors of the night explore.

Softly she left her door, her garden gate,
And seem'd as then committed to her fate;
To every horrid thought and doubt a prey,
She hurried on, already lost her way;
Oft as she glided on in that sad night,
She stopp'd to listen, and she look'd for light;
An hour she wander'd, and was still to learn
Aught of her husband's safety or return:
A sudden break of heavy clouds could show
A place she knew not, but she strove to know;

Still further on she crept with trembling feet,
With hope a friend, with fear a foe to meet:
And there was something fearful in the sight,
And in the sound of what appear'd to-night;
For now, of night and nervous terror bred,
Arose a strong and superstitious dread;
She heard strange noises, and the shapes she saw
Of fancied beings bound her soul in awe.

The moon was risen, and she sometimes shone
Through thick white clouds, that flew tumultuous on,
Passing beneath her with an eagle's speed,
That her soft light imprison'd and then freed;
The fitful glimmering through the hedge-row green
Gave a strange beauty to the changing scene;
And roaring winds and rushing waters lent
Their mingled voice that to the spirit went.

To these she listen'd; but new sounds were heard,
And sight more startling to her soul appear'd;
There were low lengthen'd tones with sobs between,
And near at hand, but nothing yet was seen;
She hurried on, and "Who is there?" she cried,
"A dying wretch!"—was from the earth replied.

It was her lover, was the man she gave,
The price she paid, himself from death to save;
With whom, expiring, she must kneel and pray,
While the soul flitted from the shivering clay
That press'd the dewy ground, and bled its life away!

This was the part that duty bad her take,
Instant and ere her feelings were awake;
But now they waked to anguish; there came then,
Hurrying with lights, loud-speaking, eager men.

" And here, my lord, we met—And who is here?
" The keeper's wife—Ah! woman, go not near!
" There lies the man that was the head of all—
" See, in his temples went the fatal ball!
" And James that instant, who was then our guide,
" Felt in his heart the adverse shot, and died!
" It was a sudden meeting, and the light
" Of a dull moon made indistinct our fight;
" He foremost fell!—But see, the woman creeps
" Like a lost thing, that wanders as she sleeps.
" See, here her husband's body—but she knows
" That other dead! and that her action shows.

" Rachel! why look you at your mortal foe?—
" She does not hear us—Whither will she go?"

Now, more attentive, on the dead they gazed,
And they were brothers: sorrowing and amazed,
On all a momentary silence came,
A common softness, and a moral shame.

" Seized you the poachers?" said my lord—" They fled,
" And we pursued not,—one of them was dead,
" And one of us; they hurried through the wood,
" Two lives were gone, and we no more pursued.
" Two lives of men, of valiant brothers lost!
" Enough, my lord, do hares and pheasants cost!"

So many thought, and there is found a heart
To dwell upon the deaths on either part;
Since this their morals have been more correct,
The cruel spirit in the place is check'd;
His lordship holds not in such sacred care,
Nor takes such dreadful vengeance for a hare;
The smugglers fear, the poacher stands in awe
Of Heaven's own act, and reverences the law;

There was, there is a terror in the place
That operates on man's offending race;
Such acts will stamp their moral on the soul,
And while the bad they threaten and control,
Will to the pious and the humble say,
Yours is the right, the safe, the certain way,
'Tis wisdom to be good, 'tis virtue to obey.

So Rachel thinks, the pure, the good, the meek,
Whose outward acts the inward purpose speak;
As men will children at their sports behold,
And smile to see them, though unmoved and cold,
Smile at the recollected games, and then
Depart and mix in the affairs of men:
So Rachel looks upon the world, and sees
It cannot longer pain her, longer please,
But just detain the passing thought, or cause
A gentle smile of pity or applause;
And then the recollected soul repairs
Her slumbering hope, and heeds her own affairs.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XXII.

THE VISIT CONCLUDED.

Richard prepares to depart—Visits the Rector—His Reception—Visit to the Sisters—Their present Situation—The Morning of the last Day—The Conference of the Brothers—Their Excursion—Richard dissatisfied—The Brother expostulates—The End of their Ride, and of the Day's Business—Conclusion.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XXII.

THE VISIT CONCLUDED.

" No letters, Tom?" said Richard—" None to-day."
" Excuse me, Brother, I must now away;
" Matilda never in her life so long
" Deferr'd—Alas! there must be something wrong!"

" Comfort!" said George, and all he could he lent;
" Wait till your promised day, and I consent;
" Two days, and those of hope, may cheerfully he spent.

" And keep your purpose, to review the place,
" My choice; and I beseech you do it grace:
" Mark each apartment, their proportions learn,
" And either use or elegance discern;
" Look o'er the land, the gardens, and their wall,
" Find out the something to admire in all:

" And should you praise them in a knowing style,
" I'll take it kindly—it is well—a smile."

Richard must now his morning visits pay,
And bid farewell! for he must go away.

He sought the Rector first, not lately seen,
For he had absent from his parish been;
" Farewell!" the younger man with feeling cried,
" Farewell!" the cold but worthy priest replied;
" When do you leave us?"—" I have days but two:"
" 'Tis a short time—but, well—Adieu, adieu!"

" Now here is one," said Richard, as he went
To the next friend in pensive discontent,
" With whom I sate in social, friendly ease,
" Whom I respected, whom I wish'd to please;
" Whose love profess'd, I question'd not was true,
" And now to hear his heartless, ' Well! adieu!'

" But 'tis not well—and he a man of sense,
" Grave, but yet looking strong benevolence;
" Whose slight acerbity and roughness told
" To his advantage; yet the man is cold;

" Nor will he know, when rising in the morn,
" Tnat such a being to the world was born.

" Are such the friendships we contract in life?
" O! give me then the friendship of a wife!
" Adieus, nay, parting-pains to us are sweet,
" They make so glad the moments when we meet.

" For though we look not for regard intense,
" Or warm professions in a man of sense,
" Yet in the daily intercourse of mind
" I thought that found which I desired to find,
" Feeling and frankness—thus it seem'd to me,
" And such farewell!—Well, Rector, let it be!"

Of the fair sisters then he took his leave,
Forget he could not, he must think and grieve,
Must the impression of their wrongs retain,
Their very patience adding to his pain;
And still the better they their sorrows bore,
His friendly nature made him feel them more.

He judged they must have many a heavy hour
When the mind suffers from a want of power;

When troubled long we find our strength decay'd,
And cannot then recal our better aid;
For to the mind, ere yet that aid has flown,
Grief has possess'd, and made it all his own;
And patience suffers, till, with gather'd might,
The scatter'd forces of the soul unite.

But few and short such times of suffering were
In Lucy's mind, and brief the reign of care.

Jane had, indeed, her flights, but had in them
What we could pity but must not condemn;
For they were always pure and oft sublime,
And such as triumph'd over earth and time,
Thoughts of eternal love that souls possess,
Foretaste divine of Heaven's own happiness.

Oft had he seen them, and esteem had sprung
In his free mind for maids so sad and young,
So good and grieving, and his place was high
In their esteem, his friendly brother's nigh,
But yet beneath; and when he said adieu!
Their tone was kind, and was responsive too.

Parting was painful; when adieu he cried,
" You will return?" the gentle girls replied;
" You must return! your Brother knows you now,
" But to exist without you knows not how;
" Has he not told us of the lively joy
" He takes—forgive us—in the Brother-boy?
" He is alone and pensive; you can give
" Pleasure to one by whom a number live
" In daily comfort—sure for this you met,
" That for his debtors you might pay a debt—
" The poor are call'd ungrateful, but you still
" Will have their thanks for this—indeed you will."

Richard but little said, for he of late
Held with himself contention and debate.

" My Brother loves me, his regard I know,
" But will not such affection weary grow?
" He kindly says ' defer the parting day,'
" But yet may wish me in his heart away;
" Nothing but kindness I in him perceive,
" In me 'tis kindness then to take my leave;
" Why should I grieve if he should weary be?
" There have been visitors who wearied me;

" He yet may love, and we may part in peace,
" Nay, in affection—novelty must cease—
" Man is but man; the thing he most desires
" Pleases awhile—then pleases not—then tires;
" George to his former habits and his friends
" Will now return, and so my visit ends."

Thus Richard communed with his heart; but still
He found opposed his reason and his will,
Found that his thoughts were busy in this train,
And he was striving to be calm in vain.

These thoughts were passing while he yet forbore
To leave the friends whom he might see no more.

Then came a chubby child and sought relief,
Sobbing in all the impotence of grief;
A full fed girl she was, with ruddy cheek,
And features coarse, that grosser feelings speak,
To whom another miss, with passions strong,
And slender fist, had done some baby-wrong.
On Lucy's gentle mind had Barlow wrought
To teach this child, whom she had labouring taught

With unpaid love—this unproductive brain
Would little comprehend, and less retain.

A farmer's daughter, with redundant health,
And double Lucy's weight and Lucy's wealth,
Had won the man's regard, and he with her
Possess'd the treasure vulgar minds prefer;
A man of thrift, and thriving, he possess'd
What he esteem'd of earthly good the best;
And Lucy's well-stored mind had not a charm
For this true lover of the well-stock'd farm,
This slave to petty wealth and rustic toil,
This earth-devoted wooer of the soil:—
But she with meekness took the wayward child,
And sought to make the savage nature mild.

But Jane her judgment with decision gave—
"Train not an idiot to oblige a slave."

And where is Bloomer? Richard would have said,
But he was cautious, feeling, and afraid;
And little either of the hero knew,
And little sought—he might be married too.

Now to his home, the morning visits past,
Return'd the guest—that evening was his last.

He met his Brother, and they spoke of those
From whom his comforts in the village rose;
Spoke of the favourites, whom so good and kind
It was peculiar happiness to find:
Then for the sisters in their griefs they felt,
And, sad themselves, on saddening subjects dwelt.

But George was willing all this woe to spare,
And let to-morrow be to-morrow's care:
He of his purchase talk'd—a thing of course,
As men will boldly praise a new-bought horse.

Richard was not to all its beauty blind,
And promised still to seek, with hope to find:
" The price indeed——"
" Yes, that," said George, " is high;
" But if I bought not, one was sure to buy,
" Who might the social comforts we enjoy,
" And every comfort lessen or destroy.

" We must not always reckon what we give,
" But think how precious 'tis in peace to live;

" Some neighbour Nimrod might in very pride
" Have stirr'd my anger, and have then defied;
" Or worse, have loved, and teased me to excess
" By his kind care to give me happiness;
" Or might his lady and her daughters bring
" To raise my spirits, to converse, and sing:
" 'Twas not the benefit alone I view'd,
" But thought what horrid things I might exclude.

" Some party man might here have sat him down,
" Some country champion, railing at the crown,
" Or some true courtier, both prepared to prove,
" Who loved not them, could not their country love:
" If we have value for our health and ease,
" Should we not buy off enemies like these?"

So pass'd the evening in a quiet way,
When, lo! the morning of the parting day.

Each to the table went with clouded look,
And George in silence gazed upon a book;
Something that chance had offer'd to his view,—
He knew not what, or cared not, if he knew.

Richard his hand upon a paper laid,—
His vacant eye upon the carpet stray'd;
His tongue was talking something of the day,
And his vex'd mind was wandering on his way.

They spake by fits,—but neither had concern
In the replies,—they nothing wish'd to learn,
Nor to relate; each sat as one who tries
To baffle sadnesses and sympathies:
Each of his Brother took a steady view,—
As actor he, and as observer too.

Richard, whose heart was ever free and frank,
Had now a trial, and before it sank:
He thought his Brother—parting now so near—
Appear'd not as his Brother should appear;
He could as much of tenderness remark
When parting for a ramble in the park.

" Yet, is it just?" he thought; " and would I see
" My Brother wretched but to part with me?
" What can he further in my mind explore?
" He saw enough, and he would see no more:

" Happy himself, he wishes now to slide
" Back to his habits——He is satisfied;
" But I am not—this cannot be denied.

" He has been kind,—so let me think him still;
" Yet he expresses not a wish, a will
" To meet again!"——And thus affection strove
With pride, and petulance made war on love:
He thought his Brother cool—he knew him kind—
And there was sore division in his mind.

" Hours yet remain,—'tis misery to sit
" With minds for conversation all unfit;
" No evil can from change of place arise,
" And good will spring from air and exercise:
" Suppose I take the purposed ride with you,
" And guide your jaded praise to objects new,
" That buyers see?"——
And Richard gave assent
Without resistance, and without intent:
He liked not nor declined,—and forth the Brothers went.

" Come, my dear Richard! let us cast away
" All evil thoughts,—let us forget the day,
" And fight like men with grief till we like boys are gay."

Thus George,—and even this in Richard's mind
Was judged an effort rather wise than kind;
This flow'd from something he observed of late,
And he could feel it, but he could not state:
He thought some change appear'd,—yet fail'd to prove,
Even as he tried, abatement in the love;
But in his Brother's manner was restraint
That he could feel, and yet he could not paint.

That they should part in peace full well he knew,
But much he fear'd to part with coolness too:
George had been peevish when the subject rose,
And never fail'd the parting to oppose;
Name it, and straight his features cloudy grew
To stop the journey as the clouds will do;—
And thus they rode along in pensive mood,
Their thoughts pursuing, by their cares pursued.

" Richard," said George, " I see it is in vain
" By love or prayer my Brother to retain;
" And, truth to tell, it was a foolish thing
" A man like thee from thy repose to bring
" Ours to disturb——Say, how am I to live
" Without the comforts thou art wont to give?

" How will the heavy hours my mind afflict,—
" No one t' agree, no one to contradict,
" None to awake, excite me, or prevent,
" To hear a tale, or hold an argument,
" To help my worship in a case of doubt,
" And bring me in my blunders fairly out.

" Who now by manners lively or serene
" Comes between me and sorrow like a screen,
" And giving, what I look'd not to have found,
" A care, an interest in the world around?"

Silent was Richard, striving to adjust
His thoughts for speech,—for speak, he thought, he must:
Something like war within his bosom strove—
His mild, kind nature, and his proud self-love:
Grateful he was, and with his courage meek,—
But he was hurt, and he resolved to speak.

" Yes, my dear Brother! from my soul I grieve
" Thee and the proofs of thy regard to leave:
" Thou hast been all that I could wish,—my pride
" Exults to find that I am thus allied:
" Yet to express a feeling, how it came,
" The pain it gives, its nature and its name,

" I know not,—but of late, I will confess,
" Not that thy love is little, but is less.

" Hadst thou received me in thy present mood,
" Sure I had held thee to be kind and good;
" But thou wert all the warmest heart could state,
" Affection dream, or hope anticipate;
" I must have wearied thee yet day by day,—
" ' Stay!' said my Brother, and 'twas good to stay;
" But now, forgive me, thinking I perceive
" Change undefined, and as I think I grieve.

" Have I offended?—Proud although I be,
" I will be humble, and concede to thee:
" Have I intruded on thee when thy mind
" Was vex'd, and then to solitude inclined?
" O! there are times when all things will molest
" Minds so disposed, so heavy, so oppress'd;
" And thine, I know, is delicate and nice,
" Sickening at folly, and at war with vice:
" Then, at a time when thou wert vex'd with these,
" I have intruded, let affection tease,
" And so offended."——
" Richard, if thou hast,
" 'Tis at this instant, nothing in the past:

" No, thou art all a Brother's love would choose;
" And, having lost thee, I shall interest lose
" In all that I possess: I pray thee tell
" Wherein thy host has fail'd to please thee well,—
" Do I neglect thy comforts?"—
" O! not thou,
" But art thyself uncomfortable now,
" And 'tis from thee and from thy looks I gain
" This painful knowledge—'tis my Brother's pain;
" And yet that something in my spirit lives,
" Something that spleen excites and sorrow gives,
" I may confess,—for not in thee I trace
" Alone this change, it is in all the place:
" Smile if thou wilt in scorn, for I am glad
" A smile at any rate is to be had.

" But there is Jacques, who ever seem'd to treat
" Thy Brother kindly as we chanced to meet;
" Nor with thee only pleased our worthy guide,
" But in the hedge-row path and green-wood side,
" There he would speak with that familiar ease
" That makes a trifle, makes a nothing please.

" But now to my farewell,—and that I spoke
" With honest sorrow,—with a careless look,

" Gazing unalter'd on some stupid prose—
" His sermon for the Sunday I suppose,—
" ' Going ?' said he: ' why then the 'Squire and you
" ' Will part at last—You 're going ?—Well, adieu !'

" True, we were not in friendship bound like those
" Who will adopt each other's friends and foes,
" Without esteem or hatred of their own,—
" But still we were to intimacy grown;
" And sure of Jacques when I had taken leave
" It would have grieved me,—and it ought to grieve;
" But I in him could not affection trace,—
" Careless he put his sermons in their place,
" With no more feeling than his sermon-case.

" Not so those generous girls beyond the brook,—
" It quite unmann'd me as my leave I took.

" But, my dear Brother! when I take at night,
" In my own home, and in their mother's sight,
" By turns my children, or together see
" A pair contending for the vacant knee,
" When to Matilda I begin to tell
" What in my visit first and last befell—

" Of this your village, of her tower and spire,
" And, above all, her Rector and her 'Squire,
" How will the tale be marr'd when I shall end—
" I left displeased the Brother and the friend?"

" Nay, Jacques is honest—Marry, he was then
" Engaged—What! part an author and his pen?
" Just in the fit, and when th' inspiring ray
" Shot on his brain, t' arrest it in its way!
" Come, thou shalt see him in an easier vein,
" Nor of his looks nor of his words complain:
" Art thou content?"—
If Richard had replied,
" I am," his manner had his words belied:
Even from his Brother's cheerfulness he drew
Something to vex him—what, he scarcely knew:
So he evading said, " My evil fate
" Upon my comforts throws a gloom of late:
" Matilda writes not; and, when last she wrote,
" I read no letter—'twas a trader's note,—
" ' Yours I received,' and all that formal prate
" That is so hateful, that she knows I hate.

" Dejection reigns, I feel, but cannot tell
" Why upon me the dire infection fell:

" Madmen may say that they alone are sane,
" And all beside have a distemper'd brain;
" Something like this I feel,—and I include
" Myself among the frantic multitude:
" But, come, Matilda writes, although but ill,
" And home has health, and that is comfort still."

George stopt his horse, and with the kindest look
Spoke to his Brother,—earnestly he spoke,
As one who to his friend his heart reveals,
And all the hazard with the comfort feels.

" Soon as I loved thee, Richard,—and I loved
" Before my reason had the will approved,
" Who yet right early had her sanction lent,
" And with affection in her verdict went,—
" So soon I felt, that thus a friend to gain,
" And then to lose, is but to purchase pain:
" Daily the pleasure grew, then sad the day
" That takes it all in its increase away!

" Patient thou wert, and kind,—but well I knew
" The husband's wishes, and the father's too;
" I saw how check'd they were, and yet in secret grew:

" Once and again, I urged thee to delay
" Thy purposed journey, still deferr'd the day,
" And still on its approach the pain increased
" Till my request and thy compliance ceased;
" I could not further thy affection task,
" Nor more of one so self-resisting ask;
" But yet to lose thee, Richard, and with thee
" All hope of social joys—it cannot be.
" Nor could I bear to meet thee as a boy
" From school, his parents, to obtain a joy,
" That lessens day by day, and one will soon destroy.

" No! I would have thee, Brother, all my own,
" To grow beside me as my trees have grown;
" For ever near me, pleasant in my sight,
" And in my mind, my pride and my delight.

" Yet will I tell thee, Richard; had I found
" Thy mind dependent and thy heart unsound,
" Hadst thou been poor, obsequious, and disposed
" With any wish or measure to have closed,
" Willing on me and gladly to attend,
" The younger brother, the convenient friend;
" Thy speculation its reward had made
" Like other ventures—thou hadst gain'd in trade;

" What reason urged, or Jacques esteem'd thy due,
" Thine had it been, and I, a trader too,
" Had paid my debt, and home my Brother sent,
" Nor glad nor sorry that he came or went;
" Who to his wife and children would have told,
" They had an uncle, and the man was old;
" Till every girl and boy had learn'd to prate
" Of uncle George, his gout, and his estate.

" Thus had we parted; but as now thou art,
" I must not lose thee—No! I cannot part;
" Is it in human nature to consent,
" To give up all the good that heaven has lent,
" All social ease and comfort to forego,
" And live again the solitary? No!

" We part no more, dear Richard! thou wilt need
" Thy Brother's help to teach thy boys to read;
" And I should love to hear Matilda's psalm,
" To keep my spirit in a morning calm,
" And feel the soft devotion that prepares
" The soul to rise above its earthly cares;
" Then thou and I, an independent two,
" May have our parties, and defend them too;

" Thy liberal notions, and my loyal fears,
" Will give us subjects for our future years;
" We will for truth alone contend and read,
" And our good Jacques shall oversee our creed.

" Such were my views; and I had quickly made
" Some bold attempts my Brother to persuade
" To think as I did; but I knew too well
" Whose now thou wert, with whom thou wert to dwell,
" And why, I said, return him doubtful home,
" Six months to argue if he then would come
" Some six months after? and, beside, I know
" That all the happy are of course the slow;
" And thou at home art happy, there wilt stay,
" Dallying 'twixt will and will-not many a day,
" And fret the gloss of hope, and hope itself away.

" Jacques is my friend; to him I gave my heart,
" You see my Brother, see I would not part;
" Wilt thou an embassy of love disdain?
" Go to this sister, and my views explain;
" Gloss o'er my failings, paint me with a grace
" That Love beholds, put meaning in my face;
" Describe that dwelling; talk how well we live,
" And all its glory to our village give;

" Praise the kind sisters whom we love so much,
" And thine own virtues like an artist touch.

" Tell her, and here my secret purpose show,
" That no dependence shall my sister know;
" Hers all the freedom that she loves shall be,
" And mine the debt,—then press her to agree;
" Say, that my Brother's wishes wait on hers,
" And his affection what she wills prefers.

" Forgive me, Brother,—these my words and more
" Our friendly Rector to Matilda bore;
" At large, at length, were all my views explain'd,
" And to my joy my wishes I obtain'd.

" Dwell in that house, and we shall still be near,
" Absence and parting I no more shall fear;
" Dwell in thy home, and at thy will exclude
" All who shall dare upon thee to intrude.

" Again thy pardon,—'twas not my design
" To give surprise; a better view was mine;
" But let it pass—and yet I wish'd to see
" That meeting too: and happy may it be!"

Thus George had spoken, and then look'd around,
And smiled as one who then his road had found;
" Follow!" he cried, and briskly urged his horse:
Richard was puzzled, but obey'd of course;
He was affected like a man astray,
Lost, but yet knowing something of the way;
Till a wood clear'd, that still conceal'd the view,
Richard the purchase of his Brother knew;
And something flash'd upon his mind not clear,
But much with pleasure mix'd, in part with fear;
As one who wandering through a stormy night
Sees his own home, and gladdens at the sight,
Yet feels some doubt if fortune had decreed
That lively pleasure in such time of need;
So Richard felt—but now the mansion came
In view direct,—he knew it for the same;
There too the garden walk, the elms design'd
To guard the peaches from the eastern wind;
And there the sloping glass, that when he shines
Gives the sun's vigour to the ripening vines.—

" It is my Brother's!"—
" No!" he answers, " No!
" 'Tis to thy own possession that we go;

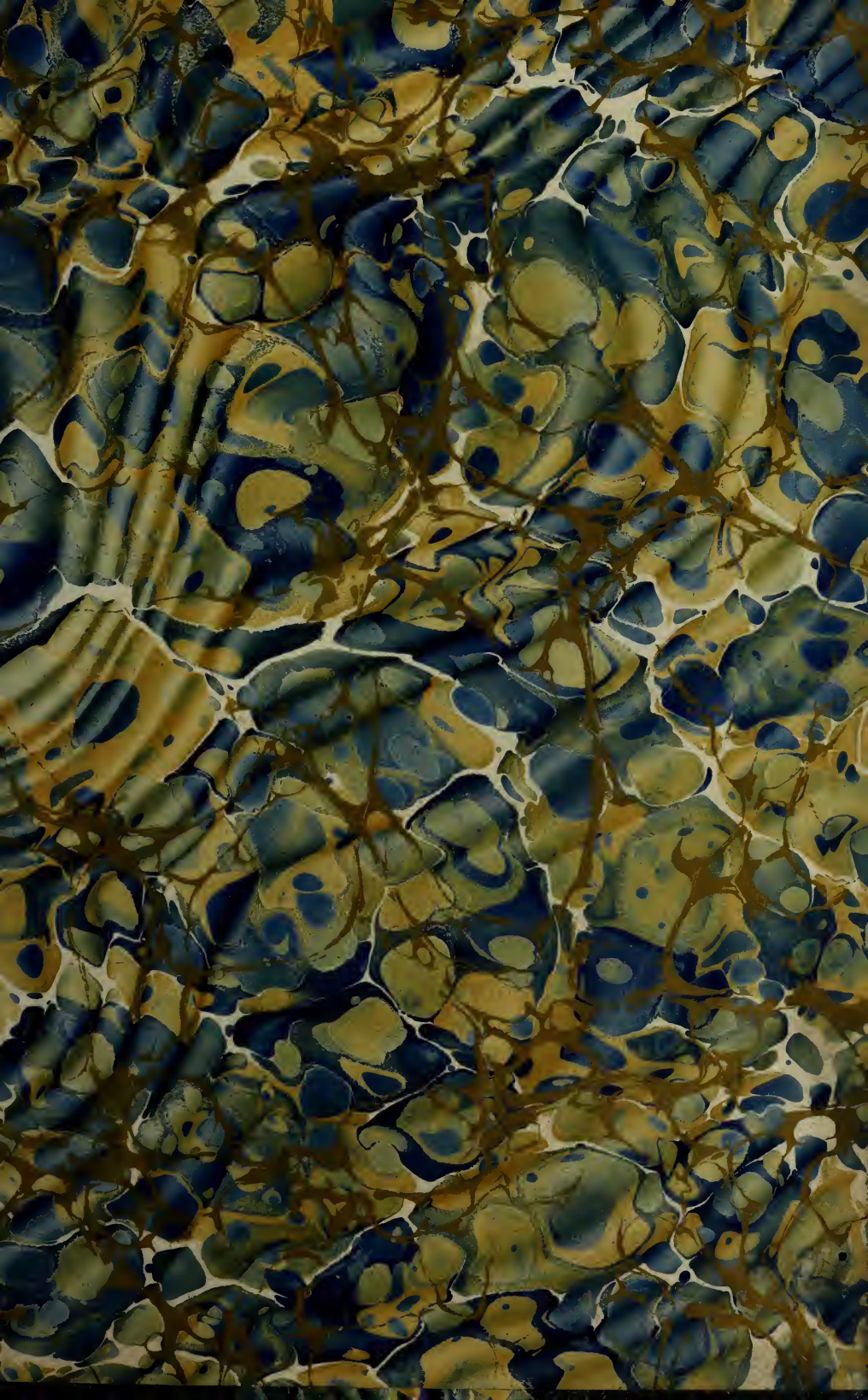
" It is thy wife's, and will thy children's be,
" Earth, wood, and water!—all for thine and thee;
" Bought in thy name—Alight, my friend, and come,
" I do beseech thee, to thy proper home;
" There wilt thou soon thy own Matilda view,
" She knows our deed, and she approves it too;
" Before her all our views and plans were laid,
" And Jacques was there t' explain and to persuade.
" Here, on this lawn, thy boys and girls shall run,
" And play their gambols when their tasks are done;
" There, from that window, shall their mother view
" The happy tribe, and smile at all they do;
" While thou, more gravely, hiding thy delight,
" Shalt cry ' O! childish!' and enjoy the sight.

" Well, my dear Richard, there's no more to say—
" Stay, as you will—do any thing—but stay;
" Be, I dispute not, steward—what you will,
" Take your own name, but be my Brother still.

" And hear me, Richard! if I should offend,
" Assume the patron, and forget the friend;
" If aught in word or manner I express
" That only touches on thy happiness;

" If I be peevish, humorsome, unkind,
" Spoil'd as I am by each subservient mind;
" For I am humour'd by a tribe who make
" Me more capricious for the pains they take
" To make me quiet; shouldst thou ever feel
" A wound from this, this leave not time to heal,
" But let thy wife her cheerful smile withhold,
" Let her be civil, distant, cautious, cold;
" Then shall I woo forgiveness, and repent,
" Nor bear to lose the blessings Heaven has lent."

But this was needless—there was joy of heart,
All felt the good that all desired t'impart;
Respect, affection, and esteem combined,
In sundry portions ruled in every mind;
And o'er the whole an unobtrusive air
Of pious joy, that urged the silent prayer,
And bless'd the new-born feelings——Here we close
Our Tale of Tales!—Health, reader, and repose!

THE END.

LONDON:
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